History of Canadian Trotskyist Movement, in 4 Parts

Speech made to the League for Socialist Action, Vancouver BC

1967: History 1921 to 1939 (Part 1)

Reg Bullock: Comrades: Here are two talks given by Ross Dowson in Vancouver. They concern the history of the Party and its background, formation and history up to and including the present. The talks are separated in time with an interval of four years, and in both instances the talks were given with virtually little preparation or time for preparation, and in effect are off-the-cuff. The first talk was given in 1967 and deals with the background and history of the Party up to and including the outbreak of War *(World War 2, 1939)*. The second talk covers the period from probably the middle war years up to and including the present. We think you will find them very enjoyable.

Ross Dowson: ...Well comrades... my talk will be based on notes ... because we have not yet ever published any extensive history of our movement, the revolutionary socialist movement of this country, and in order to deal with it tonight, the way we are going to do so will be on notes of notes.

Well comrades, Trotsky, in his second book on the Russian Revolution, alluded something to the effect, somewhere, that it was easy to carry out the revolution, the insurrection in Russia, but it was extremely difficult to build socialism in Russia... he was commenting on the medieval character of the *(tsarist)* ruling class; its structure of oppression. If we talked about the situation in this country we would have to say that the problem of building socialism once we`ve made the insurrection will be relatively easy, and the big task will be the task of successfully carrying out the seizure of power. So while we can say that it is necessary to build a vanguard party on the basis of the experiences of the Russian, and subsequently the world working class of other sections of the world, it is certainly true that we have to build a vanguard party in this country. An extremely strong, and very powerful and very vigilant revolutionary vanguard with a leadership that demonstrates great intransigence and ingenuity.

The task of building the vanguard party, the type of party that's required to make the revolution in this country was started a considerable number of years ago. I think we can say that the nucleus of that party, I think we can say with complete conviction now, exists in our movement -- that's the nucleus of the revolutionary vanguard party. That might well have been a subject for discussion and question some years ago, as a matter of fact I recall a discussion with Comrade Whitney on this very question not too many years ago; because it was suggested that this was not the nucleus of the vanguard that we had gathered together in the Trotskyist movement, perhaps that was maybe ten years ago, and we had a lengthy discussion about that. I don't recall the lines of the dispute at that time; I think at that time we had a

radicalization of the CCF, and an extensive growth of the left in the CCF, and therefore we questioned that the forces we had gathered at this time, as significant as they were, were by no means the central core of the vanguard, and the vanguard was going to come through other sources, from other movements, possibly from a series of unifications and splits from re-unifications.

But I think now we can say, this period is over; the political situation in this country, the way things are developing, that the forces, the basic and essential forces for the vanguard party - this mass revolutionary party which we require to take on the bourgeoisie - that nucleus exists in our forces today. There are no other forces anywhere. There have been in the past few years other groups come on the scene - the most significant has been the Maoist current, (with support from) the core of a very powerful government, (with the prestige) of one of the great Revolutions, but we can see now that this was a passing phase, a passing development. And there are not a lot of forces there, critical forces or substitute for the Trotskyist movement.

Our movement began in 1921 with the founding of the Communist Party of Canada

Well, where do we begin? Where does the movement come from? I think this is of great concern, particularly to the young people who are coming to our movement. From whence do we come? What are the experiences of our movement, what is the value of our experiences, what can we learn from them? Well, it might appear, on the basis of a wide experience of the past several years, that we have come from the CCF, or from the New Democratic Party, if not the CCF. That's the source and roots of our movement. To be sure of course for large sections of the cadre of our movement, **do** come from the CCF and the New Democratic Party, and when we are talking in terms of the task of building our movement, and the tradition of the Canadian working class, we most often refer to this aspect of the tradition of the movement.

But that isn't the source of the movement, that is not the source from which our movement arises. Our movement began in December of 1921 - not too long ago, but some while back. It began with the preparations for the founding of the Communist Party of Canada. That's when the Communist Party was organized in this country. It came out of other movements. We can say of course and say if you want to go back and say our movement is part of the whole history, the traditions of the struggles of the workers of the world, we wouldn't be able to start with Canada; we would have to talk about the impact of the workers who came to Canada and brought with them the experiences of other countries and other movements. We could talk about the Chartist movement and we could go back to the French Revolution, and the impact of the American Revolution, and we could go on and on and in a sense there is a considerable truth that all the history of the struggles of the world working class, of all times and all ages are part of the history of our movement, an essential part of the history of our movement.

But I think we can fix the date more or less accurately at 1921 for a very good reason. This is not to say that the Canadian workers before

that period did not show capacity for revolutionary struggle, and had not made some considerable progress in building revolutionary vanguard forces. As a matter of fact in order to talk about the significance of that date (1921) we have to talk about the forces that came together, to make it significant. So when we talk about the foundation of the Communist Party of Canada, from whence we have come, we have to talk about two main tendencies and currents that were (forged) in the struggle on this continent. Two main currents. The most important currents were the currents represented by the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) and the One Big Union movement (OBU). These were indeed revolutionary movements. I am sure some comrades have had the occasion to study the history of these movements - there is a very fine book on the IWW, two or three very fine books on the IWW; there are a fair number of references including a few on the One Big Union movement. That was the central core of these two formations.

They were revolutionary to be sure. They attracted to their ranks the most far-seeing, the most militant, the most self- sacrificing, the most heroic elements of their generation. And they were of considerable importance, of considerable stature. They were essentially syndicalist movements - revolutionary but syndicalist. They rejected parliamentary and political action. That was the essential character of these two currents. There were also other currents in the Canadian and American socialist and radical movements. Perhaps the most important ones which we should comment on was the Socialist Party of Canada. This was a Marxist current. It was a movement which was Marxist in the full sense of the word insofar as its economic analysis was concerned. As a matter of fact you have met a few of them probably if you were around the Stanley Park Club a few years ago - what was left of them - and from some of them who continued on, you could learn certain key and fundamental lessons. The SPC was very strong on Marxist economic analysis... (this current was sidelined) with the subsequent development of the revolutionary socialist movement in this country, particularly the development of our movement and what we call "the transitional program." You`ve heard some of them - as a matter of fact some of the Maoists are of this type; they have a lot of formulas, they concentrate on fundamental analysis of capitalism and they have a lot of basic formulas which they present periodically to the working class. But they really have no real program - to that degree they're educational and sectarian.

These two main currents pulled together the most viable elements which developed on the basis of the experiences of Canadian workers - they came together, and the best elements fused in the founding of the Communist Party in December of 1921 in this country. We happened to have in our files back in our archives in Toronto the first issue of the first Communist paper in this country - it was called "Workers World" - that was the name of it. It was dated August 17, 1921. The main part of this paper which was made up by and large with detailed reports of the Third Congress of the Third International - it took up the double inside spread of this paper. And this emphasis on internationalism was typical of this paper and the elements that were attracted to it in these early days. In some ways - I had occasion to comment on this to another group on this - it looked like the Fair Play for Russia Committee - it didn't have anything about the Canadian struggle in it; or very very little, it was incidental; it was about Russia - this is what the paper was about.

About the great experience for the Left of the Revolution; it published all the declarations and statements of this (3rd) Congress; all of

them, including all the broad, abstract issues of the worldwide socialist revolution. That was the founding face of the Communist Party of Canada - that's what brought together these two main currents - the main forces of these two main currents. There were the revolutionaries who were syndicalist, and revolutionaries who were strong Marxists but basically couldn't get off the plane of basic Marxist economic analysis.

This is what the Russian Revolution did for these currents. It gave them their world program. And so our movement was forged in the flames of the October Revolution. That's where our movement comes from. That's where the revolutionary socialist movement comes from on an international scale. Of course it comes from the experiences of the workers in their respective countries, but the real beginning of building the revolutionary vanguard party in Canada came from the assimilation of some of the basic experiences of the October Revolution, as it did everywhere else in the world. This is the beginning of it all, the October Revolution.

The Russian Revolution of 1917 gave us the transitional program

That's what the October Revolution did for the workers of Canada, the revolutionary workers of Canada, who were looking for some of these important answers. It gave us a transitional program - that`s in essence what it gave them. It answered some very key and fundamental and key questions: what is the path to power? That is the big question. The Socialist Party of Canada obviously didn't have any answer to this question. One (current) was extremely revolutionary and militant with connections and roots in the trade union movement, the other was involved in making the analysis of the nature of capitalism, but left aside the question of what is the path to power. (Both were) not able to answer the question of what kind of party was necessary. These two currents did not have the answers to these questions.

And the first issue of **Workers World** answered this question. In an Editorial, it went straight to the point: "Our aim is to establish soviet power in Canada." That meant a great deal to a lot of people, those words, that simple phrase. "Our aim is to establish soviet power in Canada." It may be a little difficult for you and I here to appreciate the impact of the Russian Revolution today, but if you recall the Winnipeg General Strike, that we were talking about the other night - (we would get an idea) of the thinking of the left among the workers. There were meetings in a big Winnipeg theatre, where forums were held every Sunday night, in 1917-18, -19 and -20, where considerable numbers of workers passed resolutions "for soviet power" and considering that this is the path that Canadian workers should take; in support of Luxembourg and Liebknecht [illegible] for the establishment of soviet power in Canada.

It was around this concept that the major forces were gathered, the forces out of the Socialist Party of Canada, the IWW and the OBU,

and those organizations disappeared from the scene. They didn't disappear immediately, but they had to stand up before the challenge of the October Revolution, and the best elements moved in the direction of organizing the Communist Party of Canada.I'd like to make a couple of side comments which I think will be of interest to us. In the first issue of **Workers World,** the top educators - there were reports of a few meetings taking place in the city of Toronto and in Hamilton and a few other sectors of the country, the most prominent top educator according to that paper of the revolutionary socialist currents and a founder of the Communist Party of Canada was Max Armstrong, who today is active in our movement - not too active as he is not too well - but he is in the Trotskyist movement. He was the top educator. He came out of the Socialist Party of Canada. Then also, very prominent in the reports of what was going on, those who took up the call on major issues in this first copy of the Marxist-Leninist press in this country, were Jack MacDonald and Maurice Spector. They were the most popular leaders who were identified with this development.

On November 26th they issued a call, of that year, for the foundation of a workers' party. That was the essence of the matter - to organize a type of party which we understand on the left (was required) to make the October Revolution. And they stated in that issue that we happen to have, what the basic principles were: *(. . .)* the basic principles on which this new workers' party will be organized. One: it was to organize a workers' republic, in brackets "soviet power in Canada," it would involve itself in political action, it would be involved in union struggles, it would be governed by the principles of democratic centralism; and it would decide to found an effective workers' press. So those were the five points which they challenged all revolutionary socialists in the country to measure up to *(. . .)*

And around these five points... (this challenge was addressed to those)...around the currents favoring political action - important currents which existed in the IWW and the OBU, who rejected political action. And when they said of course they said they favored being involved in the union struggles; to some considerable degree you cannot work in the trade union arena without some kind of program addressed in some sensitive way to the daily struggles of the workers; in a sense they also settled accounts with the sectarian elements, the educationalist elements, in the Socialist Party of Canada. And of course there were big debates in these circles around these five points. And by December 1921 the Workers Party of Canada was founded. And that was the beginning of the tradition which we are the continuators of in this country.

It was founded by a conference with sixty delegates, quite small, sixty delegates, in the Labor Temple of Toronto. Now, on one occasion some while back, the **Canadian Tribune** *(journal of the Stalinist CP of Canada)* had a lengthy article - they were celebrating "so many years of the workers' press," probably 40 years of the workers' press, if I recall correctly the date of this editorial. And they were talking about the continuity of the workers' press, the continuity of their press, with their *(Stalinist -ed.)* movement. *(. . .)* They attempted to make an identity of their movement with the early forces that had come together to found the Communist Party of Canada. And so we wrote an editorial reply to this myth that the CP had been promoting for some years. We went to the trouble of digging up the names of the persons on the first National Executive Committee of the Communist Party of Canada. Then we went down the list to relate what happened to them - who they are, where they are now, and what happened to them. So here is the record...

A majority of the CPC leaders were presently expelled for "Trotskyism"

There was a chap by the name of J.B. Smith of the National Executive Committee, another by the name of Jack MacDonald, another by the name of William Moriarty, Tim Buck, an A. Brown, Max Armstrong, H. Gilbert, Ed Buhay, Malcolm Bruce, and the secretary was Jack Kavanaugh. *(Dowson omits Maurice Spector -ed.)* This was the founding core, the executive leadership at the founding of the Communist Party. Well, what happened to these people? What weight does the *(Stalinized)* Communist Party have to the claim of being the heir of this tradition? Well, Jack Kavanaugh, who was the secretary, he left Vancouver where he had been a leading activist in the Vancouver General Strike of 1919 - he left a few years later for Australia, and he became the founder of the Australian Trotskyist movement. He died about two years ago. Someone was relating to me the other day that according to Malcolm Bruce, Jack Kavanaugh was accused of being a Trotskyist shortly after *(. . .)* and this was very early, about 1926. He was accused of being a Trotskyist at that time. Then there was Moriarty - well, he was expelled as a "left" ...from the Communist Party of Canada - that's a dissident of some kind - he was in the Right Opposition according to them (the Stalinists) and he died about 1936. Then Buhay - he was also expelled from the Communist Party of Canada as a Lovestonite, and then he got back later, and then subsequently died. Malcolm Bruce - well, Malcolm of course, most of you know him, he could be characterized as a political ideologist *(. . .)* and (generally) a Trotskyist. It's true now that he is involved with Progressive Worker *(a Maoist tendency based on the West Coast -ed.)* - Malcolm has deteriorated a little bit in the last while - our relationship hasn't been what it was and not all what we desired it to be - but essentially he had (become) a Trotskyist in outlook, and he was an active member of our movement up until a few years ago.

Max Armstrong? Max dropped out of the movement rather early, about 1923, but after a series of experiences, he went into the CCF after a period of political inactivity, and he found his way to our movement about 1947. Jack MacDonald - he was expelled in 1930 from the Communist Party of Canada, and he had found his way into the Trotskyist movement. And Spector, of course, was the founder of the Trotskyist movement in this country, and the first Trotskyist on the North American continent. So, you can't say that there is much in the early tradition and certainly in the personnel, the composition of the leading body of the Communist Party for the CP of Canada today that they still wish to claim as their tradition. I don't know about the other names (the current CP is claiming as founders) - I've never heard of them being active in the Communist Party of Canada, J.D. Smith, A Brown, and H. Gilbert - I've never heard of these people before. There is only one person who the CP can claim as their own, and they certainly can, and that's Tim Buck *(comments from the audience)*.

I think a few words can be said about some of the problems of the early movement. Why did the movement arrive so late in the day - December 1921? Well, there were some real and concrete problems. For one thing, while the Canadian workers have had considerable class struggle experience and demonstrated great combativity, they were very weak in revolutionary theory, in revolutionary experience. *(. . .)* for instance, some of the basic writings of Lenin and Trotsky were not available until well on into the '20s. They were not available

(. . .) and this was the great experience of the revolutionary working class movement - the October Revolution. It took some years for this experience to become familiar to the workers of Canada; before they had (an opportunity) to learn in a profound way the meaning of the October Revolution.

I have had occasion to have a few talks with some of the early leaders of the Communist Party of Canada; I had a talk with Maurice Spector when he had been in Canada a short while ago, about some of the problems of the movement, and to get a picture of what the movement was in these days, in the time at our disposal. Well it was the opinion of comrade Spector that the Communist Party of Canada, the connections that it had were somewhat better than they were in the United States of America. Why? The language federations were the real base of the movement, and remains the base of the Communist Party as we now know it - the language groupings, the Ukrainian, the Finnish and other national groupings - in the States and in Canada, they were under the party`s control - (but the Canadian) party did not have to fight these elements in order to Canadianize them, and that was one of the more important experiences of the party in America - this was one of the big struggles in the American Communist Party - to Americanize Bolshevism. Apparently the Canadian party didn't have much trouble. ..It appears also that the history of the Canadian party was not so fraught with internal struggles, as the American party was. If you read the history of American Trotskyism in the two works of Theodore Draper, you will see that there was a great intellectual ferment in the American party and a great deal of factional struggle and combat in the American party. This didn't develop in the Canadian party - (because) perhaps the political level in the Canadian party was lower than the American party, and the Anglo-Saxon base of the party was quite strong. And the party made considerable progress in its early days - and relatively, it was a more powerful party than the American Communist Party. Of course it came into bad days very quickly, from the point of view of reaction. As you know,Section 98 came out of the Winnipeg General Strike, the party was driven underground; but it weathered this experience and adopted a semi-legal character in the form of a Labor Defense Lague, and appeared to have had no trouble following these problems.

Maurice Spector, who was the theoretical leader of the Party, was expelled six years later, in 1928, while he was still the theoretical leader of the party. As a matter of fact he came back from the Congress that he attended with comrade Cannon *(SWP-US leader)* and he didn't speak at any meeting of the membership. And it was three years before he was joined by Jack MacDonald, who was the popular leader of the party, who was the mass worker of the party. He was a pattern-maker by trade, a very popular orator - I heard him a couple of times before he died, and he reminded me very much of Comrade Cannon in his manner and authority of his working-class experiences, in a broad and popular exposition of revolutionary and theoretical ideas. He joined Spector in *(the CPC-Left Opposition)* 1931. But we have torecord that they never got to first base in *appealing to the membership of)* the Communist Party of Canada.

An uphill battle to establish a Trotskyist alternative to the Stalinized mass Communist Party

There was a real gap *(after the break from*) the Communist Party of Canada. While for a period it was a joke in this period of American Trotskyism, that Cannon was like a general without an army - Cannon, Abern, Shachtman - three generals without an army, but it appears to me from reading the history of the American movement, (�that they did manage to start from an important basis, for instance with a grouping) in Minneapolis, which subsequently played an important role in stabilizing the American Trotskyist movement... *(tape inaudible - ed.)* Spector and MacDonald were never able to do this *(marshall forces on the left from across the country to the new Trotskyist movement, as the American movement had --ed).* The leaders of the American party - Cannon, Abern and Shachtman, were bigger figures and accepted by the party� (they appeared larger) in stature than Spector and MacDonald. However, Spector was a top theoretician. There are a couple of books perhaps comrades are not aware of in the library (which contain writings by him) one of which is (an introduction to Trotsky's) Lessons of October and there are other important writings of his in the early issues of the (SWP) journal **The Fourth International**. He was a theoretician of a very high order. He was the political leader of the Canadian Communist Party, there is no question about that.

So we have the two top leaders of the Canadian Communist Party, expelled from the Communist Party, and very quickly... and isolated (from the Party - deprived from contact) with a generation of Communist Party members. There was the problem of the inexperience of the cadre of the party. Then of course there was the great authority of the Russian Revolution. This authority was awesome - it was the main basis and inspiration of overcoming the difficulties piecing together the best elements of the revolutionary workers of this country. But at the same time, the authority of the October Revolution was transferred to certain leaders, by certain elements in the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and of course thereupon transferred to certain elements of the Canadian party leaders who lined them up - namely Tim Buck. We can say that it was the defeat of the Left Opposition in Russia (that affected the) Canadian Communist Party ... which generally stood outside of this conflict ... it was settled in the great conflict inside the party of Russia - (which became a) vast betrayal of that struggle which decided the struggle in this country. (For clarification) you should read the second volume of Isaac Deutscher`s work on Trotsky - **The Prophet Unarmed**. Here Deutscher gives an indication of what was involved in this struggle. That settled the struggle in Canada, and Tim Buck became the transmission belt for the Stalinist bureaucracy. He went through all the Stalinist policy twists.

Spector launched the struggle on the North American continent to rebuild the party. He was actually the first Trotskyist in America. (The American historian Theodore) Draper provides some interesting evidence on this period in his second volume The History of the American Communist movement. Spector knew what was happening in the October Revolution (... he learned about the facts) while he was in Germany in the early 20s, and he corresponded with the journal **Inprecor** which was the journal of the Comintern (while he was) over there for a year or so *(. . .)* At any rate he came to learn what was going on in Communist Parties (while he was) in the Soviet Union, and in the working class movements at large. And he came to take a position in the titanic debate around the theory of socialism in one country as early as 1926, two years before the rupture took place, and for some considerable period before 1928 when he came into contact with Cannon. He knew that Cannon was a dissident of some kind in the American party, and he told Cannon, as early as

1926, that he was a Trotskyist. Cannon has never commented on this for some time; someone going down to the SWP vacation school should ask Cannon what happened here and what was his relations with Spector, and why didn't he move more rapidly in this situation.

At any rate, Spector was the pioneer. Perhaps Cannon didn't grasp the significance of the struggle (between Trotsky and Stalin) - quite possible, not many did. It is quite possible he did understand the significance of the struggle and he had to take (precaution until) the implications of it (became clear) - that's quite possible, too. At any rate, Cannon didn't take a stand with a Trotskyist position in 1926, with Spector, but they formed some kind of working relation, some kind ofcollaboration. At any rate, by the time 1928 came along, they both travelled as delegates to the meeting of the Comintern Congress. They went to Moscow and they came back, and Cannon relates the episode in (his book) **American Trotskyism** of how Spector came across Trotsky's document. Well it wasn't exactly that because Spector already had some familiarity with the question, but that was the beginning in a sense because he now had in hand all the program of the Left Opposition. And they brought it back together, they brought back this document - the program of Trotskyism in 1927-1928.

Combatting the siren song of the fatal theory of "socialism in one country"

And I was saying the other day, speaking the other night about Trotskyism then - this is what Trotskyism was at this time. The big issue of course was the debate around the theory of socialism in one country. (It made) Trotskyism very easily identifiable in this country... there are some people who encompass many other persons as Trotskyists, as a matter of fact I understand there are eighty-five persons in the Ontario New Democratic Party Youth who are on a list - a purge list - and I am quite sure we don't have 85 Trotskyists in the Ontario NDY, but there are Trotskyists. *(. . .)* If we looked further and picked up some people who we might not think are worthy, but all in all the NDP leadership are more or less essentially correct, they have a fair idea of what Trotskyism is - it's the socialist current in the New Democratic Party, they're the organizers of the socialist current in the NDP, they're the activists around the antiwar movement and of course as we could delineate their program, they're the Fidelistas, as the comrades on the West Coast who support the Cuban Revolution were accused of being; so they (the NDP leadership) found a rule-of-thumb to designate Trotskyism; and it is relatively easy to determine what Trotskyism is, today. Well, that was true in 1921, too. It was very clear what it was. It was Soviet Power and the Five Points. Soviet Power - for a workers' republic in Canada, political action, involvement in union struggles, democratic centralism, and the foundation of the party press. That's what Trotskyism was in 1921. What Bolshevism was in 1921.

In 1928, the issue involved in the struggle led by Trotsky, as it was dramatically revealed to us - by 1928, the entire cadre of the Bolshevik Party - the issues when this struggle took place were not too clear to workers in this country; even advanced workers couldn't understand it - what the theory of "socialism in one country" was. Of course the Stalinist slander machine had done a big job on us and made a caricature of us. I remember when I first came around the socialist movement (in 1934-35 -ed.) there was a big discussion about what "socialism in one country" really was; but it was summarized very clearly in a pamphlet which we carry in the store - two pamphlets

- one, "The Third International after Lenin" which was the essential part of the "Criticism of the Draft Program" that Spector brought back with him, and in the first introduction there is a very short and curt summary about what this struggle was about.

Trotsky opposed the formulation by Bukharin, sponsored by Stalin, that socialism could be built in one country. Some people saw this as an academic question - the argument was, what have you got to lose; if you prove wrong, well nothing's lost, you know. But Trotsky, in this very short summary, countered this line. He said, if this theory is adopted - this idea that Russia can build socialism, all by itself, if it is left in peace, free from imperialist attacks - he says, regardless of the aims and objectives of those persons who support this theory - it is inevitable at this stage that the tasks of the world working class is **not** to make the revolution in their own country, but becomes to preserve the peace. This idea is to achieve the main task, and that is to build socialism, and therefore the Comintern that must be transformed from the revolutionary vanguard movement, the general staff of the worldwide revolution, into the border-guard of the Soviet bureaucracy.

This was the essential theoretical discussion of this generation of the Comintern. Of course they didn't understand the truth about Trotskyism (until too late) - this is exactly what happened. The theory of socialism in one country was adopted, and the Communist Parties instead of being revolutionary socialist parties committed to developing vanguard parties and to pose the issues clearly on the need to take power - instead of taking a revolutionary orientation, they became pawns in the diplomatic maneuvers of the Soviet bureaucracy. And all you have to do is read the history of the Thirties - in France, in Spain, in China - in order to see the truth of Trotsky's prediction. *(. . .)*

Left Opposition Trotskyists also fight against Stalinist ultra-leftism

And the Comintern was by and large in a period of ultra-leftism, which very few of us had had any experience of. You know most of us had been around the radical movement but the bulk of us were around the Communist movement in this country and the left which was largely reformist in character. It is popular-frontist, class-collaborationist *(seeking coalitions on bourgeois terms -ed.)* etc. - that's been the general experience of Canadian workers in this country - with the Communist Party - for many many decades. It wasn't always thus, in the thirties when the big struggle was being waged by Spector and MacDonald with Buck - against Buck, and the supporters of the Kremlin. At that time the Communist Party was on a left jag - as a matter of fact I was just thinking about it a few minutes ago - it was (to later) influence Mao Tse Tung who underwent a similar experience - sectarianism is very heavy stuff - its un-reasonable, you know, once you adopt it, you know, you become insensitive to (working out a) program, and questioning. I've had talks with Maoists; there is no question they are revolutionaries, they are good types but they are incurable (sectarians); they're insensitive; it is practically impossible to have an intelligent and rational discussion with them. And I think if you have had that experience with the Maoists you will get a little inkling of what the problem was in trying to have a serious political discussion with workers who were around the Communist Party

under the influence of the "Third Period" *(the Comintern's)* period of extreme ultra-leftism.

So now comrades, I would like to say a few words about the Left Opposition in Canada. Spector and MacDonald founded the movement of course. They attempted to remain in the Communist Party of Canada; they attempted to reform the CP of C. - that's why they called themselves "the Left Opposition." - as distinct from the Right Opposition. And for the whole early period of the movement in Canada they were circulators of the (US-SWP) **Militant** - we didn't publish our own paper - we promoted the **Militant**. The Canadian party to a considerable degree was - I was going to say an "appendage" - not the most accurate word - in fact had fraternal relations, close collaborative relations, a relation of equals, as a matter of fact Spector and MacDonald were certainly the equals of the leaders of the American Trotskyists - of the Left Opposition in the United States - on all counts.

In this period, of course, as I said it was extremely difficult to carry on rational discussions, to educate cadre elements around the Communist Party of Canada. The movement began to grow for a period around the German experience.
Spector was admirably quick to play a role in this process because he had been in Germany for some years and... and had seen some of the most important writings of Trotsky on the German experience, and I think most of you have seen these writings. At any rate Spector held very large meetings in Toronto - very large meetings. If you look back in the press, which we had started to publish - you will see reports of the Trotskyist movement; we had very large meetings. Spector spoke to thousands; he was a great orator - I heard him once or twice ¯ he was one of the most powerful orators I have ever heard.

But generally we didn't get very far in this period, because there was a big problem. The working class was suffering defeat. I remember reading at one time, someone was questioning Trotsky. They asked Trotsky: how to you explain this phenomenon? Even if you are correct, you have nothing to stand on; you are cursed with the gift of understanding **all**, but without the power to intervene in the situation. Trotsky understood the whole course of history. If you read the life of Trotsky in the Thirties, you will see he challenged himself - to (explain) and discuss **all** of the problems of the world revolution - on China, on Germany, on France, on Spain, on the whole field of the world class struggle - it was Trotsky who was writing the most important documents - he was the Marxist (writer). Trotsky had this great gift of understanding all. It was incredible, his insight; but how could Trotsky explain, that with this great insight, why didn't his movement, which he symbolized, grow? Here he has proven himself correct a thousand times, again and again, why didn't his movement grow, and flourish - he was proven correct on this occasion, on that occasion, why didn't the movement grow *(. . .)*?

(tape ends) (Speech continues into Part 2

As Stalinism spirals into crisis, enter the mass-based social-democratic CCF Trotsky projects
the concept of the "French Turn"

1971: The History of the Canadian Trotskyist Movement – World War 2 to 1971 (Part 2 continued)

- Trotskyists in Canada driven underground by the War Measures Act Wartime repression against the Left very severe in Canada
- Canadian Trotskyists plan a public conference before end of the War
- Labor Challenge is launched: "THERE IS NO PEACE"
- The battle to consolidate the great Canadian industrial unions won after the War The foundation of the Trotskyist RWP
- The CCF grows into the first mass labor party in North America Pablo's attempt to liquidate the forces of world Trotskyism The wave of expulsions of Trotskyists from the CCF
- The youth radicalization brings a breakthrough for Trotskyism

(. . .) {inaudible - ed.}
...Why didn't the movement grow, on this occasion, in this case and other cases; why didn't the movement grow? Well Trotsky explains very well the phenomenon of the tremendous defeat - a devastating defeat that the working class movement had never seen before *(. . .)* Most important was the debacle when the biggest Communist Party in the world, the party that the entire Comintern - all the revolutionary workers looked to, as the party that was going to make the next breakthrough, a breakthrough which would lead the forces which would change the whole relationship of forces decisively - this party went down without a shot.

Trotsky said if this is what is happening; its true, my theory was proving correct; the theory of Bolshevism was sustained - sustained in a negative sense; was proved correct, but the big reality was the defeat that the working class movement suffered, and so what was the result? The destruction of the revolutionary cadre, in some cases physically, physically destroyed (*see Victor Serge,* ***Memoirs of a Revolutionary 1901-1941,*** *Oxford, 1963 - ed.)* Workers learned the lessons, but died shortly after; they were removed from the political arena, unable to transfer the lessons of their own experiences forward - and the demoralization of an entire generation of workers.

And that was the main problem which confronted the building of the revolutionary forces in the period of the Thirties. Trotskyist ideology was crushed - and all you have to do is read these documents *(. . .)* (documenting) the problems of the working class in their respective countries. But the big phenomenon, the phenomenon which hit everybody in the jaw, was the defeat - the defeat which brought to the fore all the conservative tendencies in all the Communist Parties, the adaptationist tendencies, the Stalinized tendencies-(that trend) continued in ascendancy over the workers in this country. That's not to say there weren't any internal disputes in the Communist Party. After the Lenin dispute, the *(. . .)* dispute, and that was primarily within the CP of the Soviet Union; there were disputes (in Canada) - for instance the McKeen struggle in B.C. McKeen was a provincial leader of the BC Communist Party, and he came to the conclusion that the CP was an opportunist party, no longer Marxist-Leninist, no longer for the class struggle; he certainly had the evidence, as a matter of

fact if you have read his book - I assume you must have a copy in the library here - and if you don't we will have to send you ours (in Toronto) because it concerns British Columbia primarily - he led the struggle in the CP of Canada in British Columbia primarily, against opportunism. He was moving in the revolutionary socialist direction - he didn't make it, but he was moving in that direction. His criticism was primarily around the Liberal-Labor coalition policies of the Communist Party - perhaps you know the CP of Canada was even able to succeed in this (at the time); it hasn't been very successful in the last few years • but it succeeded in the 1945 Federal elections, when it arrived in a coalition with the Liberal Party. McKeen had all the evidence. They had thousands of dollars at their disposal that the Liberal Party gave them, to fill up their election chest. And the Communist Party ran in every riding in British Columbia where it could hope to defeat the CCF. This coalition was an instrument of the Liberal Party against the CCF.

Well I see I have about ten minutes. In order to understand the problem of building the Trotskyist movement, of carrying on the struggle that was launched in 1921, following the impact of Stalinization; the main phenomenon you have to observe are the difficulties of this process of building the revolutionary vanguard party, was the atmosphere of defeat that permeated the revolutionary socialists - there was defeat from all sides. The Communist Party made it difficult to make headway against the reformist program, it was a (inaudible) struggle against the current - there were a couple of upsurges, it wasn't all one grey color - but by and large it was a period of defeat for the revolutionary socialist movement, and therefore it was a period of difficult - extremely difficult, you hardly have an idea how difficult it was - for revolutionary socialists to function, to hold on.

I remember reading somewhere where someone asked: "What did you do in the War?" Someone (replied): "I survived." •A profound comment. What did the Trotskyists, the revolutionary socialists, do in the Thirties? Well, they survived. That was a great achievement, to survive. To get a picture of those days, I used to read about the History of American Trotskyism and the great difficulties they had - sometimes not enough funds, which was sometimes a problem for us. Cannon talks about how they had a rent-revolving system where if they didn't have enough money to pay for a headquarters, so some comrade would delay paying his rent; and he would give the money to the organizer, and then he would delay for a little while, and then another comrade would delay paying his rent to pay the first comrade's rent; so we survived by the revolving rent process. So we had a hard time financially, but we also had an extremely difficult time getting a hearing.

As Stalinism spirals into crisis, enter the mass-based social-democratic CCF

(. . .) Our comrades were beat up. Jack MacDonald was very seriously beat up, on a couple of occasions, by Communist Party hooligans... this was a common occurrence. *(. . .)* At any rate, the movement survived. That was the main achievement of the movement - a very important achievement. I just want to close off this area of the report (with a review) of the problems that started to confront us with the development of the CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation). This started to become a critical question for our movement at the

time of it's foundation, which is when I happened to come into the movement, in 1936, when our movement was very much concerned with this phenomenon - which we had to face, and which the American party had not had - the challenge and the opportunity of the growth at this early stage, of a mass, agrarian, populist movement, and later, which developed into a labor party. Of all the sections of the Fourth International I would say the experience of the Canadian party has been the most profound and the most fruitful on the whole question of meeting such a challenge.

In 1936, the movement then was composed of a very small handful of comrades, of generally sophisticated workers, and intellectuals, many of them unemployed - the majority of them unemployed - perhaps one hundred in all, that's my recollection of that period; and at that time there was a big discussion on the CCF - of what we should do about it, and Trotsky's concept of the theory of such currents; which came out of his advice to the French comrades, who were faced with a somewhat similar phenomenon of a leftward-moving social-democratic party, in France; and Trotsky projected the need of our movement to make an entry into this movement. And this period could be dealt with from another aspect from what I dealt with - we could talk about the continued problem of building the revolutionary vanguard party. In the 20s, Lenin developed the theory of the United Front, and this was designed to overcome the failure of the Communist Party to settle accounts with social-democracy.

The Russian Revolution had a tremendous impact on the world working class, but the social-democracy remained an important factor despite the validity of the experience of the Communist Party and in the face of the appeal for the foundation launched by the Comintern (for the establishment of) communist parties throughout the world. The Communist Party was not able to solve this problem, of how to establish hegemony over the revolutionary working class. The Communist Party of Canada and the CPs of every other country almost was able to come to grips with this problem armed with the concept of the United Front. Now of course you could say the cadre failed, with the Stalinization that took place of the Communist Party, in implementing this theory, particularly in the "Third Period." *(The sudden ultra-left turn of the Stalinists -ed.)*

Trotsky projects the concept of the "French Turn"

But Trotsky projected a new theory to overcome the problem, the problem of the isolation of the revolutionary vanguard, and that was the "French Turn," what we knew as entrism; and this became one of the great pivotal debates in our movement for the next period. This led to a split - the first experience of our movement on the discussion of the question of the CCF and how we can meet the challenge the CCF presents us; how can we establish our hegemony over radical workers - this dispute in our movement led to a split in our ranks, in '36.

At that time we were faced with the challenge of making an entry into the CCF. One force in the party, led by Jack MacDonald, favored an entry into the CCF. There was an equal force in number and influence in the party who opposed it; not from the point of view that it

was wrong in principle, but (they) considered that the tactic would not work; in Canada the situation was unfavourable for us at this time. There was another sectarian tendency which developed on the fringe of our movement who opposed it in principle. And that group was called the "League for a Revolutionary Workers Party," and if you are in Toronto once in a while you'll hear about it - I don't know what they called it in Vancouver; they did have a small connection in Vancouver.

This was the group that, in American Trotskyism, was called the "Field Group." I don't know how many of you comrades have heard about it, but Cannon talks about the experiences with the group around C.J. Field, who had his biggest forces not in the United States, but in Canada. As a matter of fact when I came into the movement, the Field Group, the LRWP, was bigger than the actual Trotskyist movement, and they were a sectarian current within our movement, who opposed entrism in principle. They considered that under all circumstances and all conditions it was necessary to maintain the independent banner of the revolutionary vanguard party.

But the most important dispute took place on a different plane, on the tactics of the entry. This difference was not overcome until 1938, as the two Trotskyist tendencies were re-united, at the 1938 founding convention of the Socialist Workers Party (USA -ed.) and if you have had an opportunity to read the official documents, bound together, of the founding of the Fourth International, you will see a report in that document of the reunification of the Canadian section. It`s in a grey edition (�.) And there they recorded the reunification of the two tendencies in Canada, in January 1938. But of course the big problem then was, the War. No sooner had the movement been reunited, and started to move forward again to project its ideas, starting to publish Socialist Action, that was the paper; we got two issues out and we were banned; the movement was declared illegal - we were driven underground. Now I think I will just leave it there, at the War, and we will deal with the post-war period, the second part of this period (at a future meeting) - I see my time is up. *(Applause)*

1971 The History of the Canadian Trotskyist Movement, World War 2 to the present

Well comrades, my visit here in BC was by chance; as I had an opportunity to respond to a big affair our comrades in Brandon (Manitoba), managed to organize, just last weekend, through their influence in the trade union movement there, to organize a seminar over a two-day period and we were able to bring a couple of our comrades - comrade Penny S. from Montreal to speak on the Quebec situation, and myself to speak on the European union. I can only spare two copies (of the report) But the occasion was that I was able to get a cheap fare to Brandon and then to get another cheap fare to Saskatoon where I spoke at a campus there, and I didn't want to go back to Toronto without coming out to the Coast to see you comrades and to see the comrades in Edmonton before I go to Europe for a period.

(Indistinct...) Some while ago while I was here I prepared two talks on the history of our movement. I don't remember them, unfortunately (laughter) and the notes appear to be destroyed or lost but I am supposed to supplement that speech (laughter). I have a little bit of a task. Okay. I gather from Phil that the history that appeared on the first tape is the history of our movement from the early days of its foundation. Perhaps you know that our movement is the continuity of the Communist movement that came into formation out

of the experiences of the Canadian working class who were inspired by the October Revolution in Russia. And I gather that that talk is taped and preserved, and it takes us up to the, yes, the First World War probably to the beginning of the Second World War. So I am going to try to give you a little sketch of the history of the movement. I hope this doesn't prejudice the publication of a pamphlet which I am going to prepare very shortly on this topic. You will have to scrap all this. *(Laughter - but, this pamphlet never appeared - ed.)*

Trotskyists in Canada driven underground by the War Measures Act

(Indistinct...) some of you were politically active at that time, and perhaps some of you weren't alive at the time - and so I will try to give you a picture of what the situation was confronting the revolutionary socialists, the forerunners of our movement at that time - when World War 2 broke. I gather the first speech took us right up to there. So I have to say first that the revolutionary movement was under a tremendous suppression when WW 2 broke. At that time the revolutionary socialists were driven underground. The first case of ("Section 98") which was a part of the War Measures Act, and you're all familiar with that, following the Quebec events; the first case that was prosecuted under the War Measures Act was against one of our comrades who dared to speak up on our behalf against World War 2. His name was Frank Watson; he was a member of the Toronto movement, and we decided that it wanted to make a declaration to the workers of Canada despite the difficulties. (Ross's sister Lois Bedard later reported that it was Ross who rounded up bail to free him from jail -ed.) The repression was tremendous - for instance the first victim was our press, if you followed the sequence of it - I'm not sure if you have a microfilm of it, but one will be available shortly - an issue of our press was prepared for January 1939 and was suppressed - the printer would not print it. I think there was one copy - that's all. (See Vanguard, Sept. 1939 - ed.) Because under the Canada Defense Regulations, any printer and any technician, who was a participant in the production were held co-responsible with the Editor. That's what the War Measures Act is, as you know. So no printer would touch our paper, and our paper ceased to come out. We were denounced by the Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario as a subversive group, and of course this was made known to the authorities who had the responsibility to act thereupon, and so our movement was driven underground.

As a matter of fact, the entire left was driven underground in the first phase of the war. You may not know it, but in the early stages, the CCF - the precursor of the NDP, which had been committed to opposition to the war, also was under circumstances which were somewhat oppressive to its functioning. (CCF leader) Woodsworth, in the name of the movement, when the war broke out, disassociated the CCF on the position of support of the war, but, nonetheless, he participated in the betrayal of the official position of the party by turning over the rostrum to Coldwell (a leading CCFer) and Coldwell committed the CCF to World War 2. In this period the CCF was in a favourable situation, and the Communist Party opposed the war in the early days before the invasion of Germany (into Soviet Russia, betraying the Stalin-Hitler Pact-- ed.) which caused a reversal in their position.

So, our comrade Frank Watson, who spoke out against the war - I don't remember his speech, but I believe it dealt with, he exposed the

fraud of this "war for democracy" by revealing the oppressive circumstances under which the colonial masses lived under the heel of British imperialism - and he was immediately arrested and sentenced to three months in jail. At any rate, the oppression was so complete that the whole movement was driven underground. And this was not parallel to other English-speaking countries. In the United States, the Socialist Workers Party was able to function quite openly. You are well aware of the Minneapolis Defence Trials - but that was defence carried on by our movement in the United States on its rights to promote its views, and while some of our comrades went to jail, for expounding our revolutionary socialist ideology, the movement was never suppressed. The Militant continued to publish. I think Cannon relates there, how the movement had developed such a strong cadre, that when the American Trotskyist movement was decapitated by the prison sentences, they had sufficient cadre and resilience that they were able to carry on the fight against World War 2, in the United States, openly, with almost no restrictions.

In the case of the European and British Trotskyists, they were never under any particular repression at all; as a matter of fact, Jock Haster (?) who was the leader of our movement at that time carried on a big electoral campaign at the beginning of the war as a candidate for the House of Commons (British parliament), and all during the war the French section functioned openly. *(. . .)* But the Trotskyists in Canada were driven underground. So we were confronted with a big responsibility to hold on to what cadre we had gathered, to preserve the doctrine of the revolutionary socialists. And for the next period which I am dealing with had the character of a "holding operation." To survive was an achievement for revolutionary socialists under such conditions. As you see, we not only survived but we are now having a bit of a revival. All the other groups were pretty well smashed. There was another group which called itself Trotskyist - described by Cannon; you will recall he referred to a group under the leadership of C.J. Field - an intellectual, an economist who came to our movement - and the anecdote which Cannon uses to present Field is around his substitution of himself as a trade union leader, for the Party. That's the incident that Cannon uses to illustrate the Field case.

But Field developed a movement, and his biggest group was in Canada. And when I joined the movement, in Canada in the 30s, about 1936 or so, why, the Field group was larger than the official section of the Fourth International. But this group, which became a centrist group, that is, a revolutionary formation which is revolutionary in words but not in deeds. This group was opposed to the formation of the Fourth International, and considered the whole question of entrism - the tactic which we developed in order to allow ourselves to fuse with radical and developing currents within the CCF, they considered that a betrayal. This group disappeared completely - just disintegrated - with the impact of the war. There were some well-known revolutionary socialists in that group, but not one of them survived. After we tried to gather together our group in Canada from all the forces we could after the war, not one of those persons existed or was functioning, and none of them came through. So our movement was the only revolutionary socialist current to come out of the war.

Wartime repression against the Left very severe in Canada

This war period was a very difficult period. In order to try to hold ourselves together, to survive by publishing our literature, and we published a little mimeographed sheet - it was a big thing for us - when we put it out we never knew when we might be arrested when we were circulating it. For anybody to be caught with it would be picked up - they were of course taking all kinds of radicals and putting them into concentration camps. The entire leadership of the Communist Party at that time, who were at that time opposed to the war, were picked up; and there were other radicals and dissidents who were arrested, so our action in publishing the paper, modest as it was, was a matter of some concern from a security point of view; but we did this because we thought it was necessary to hold our own forces together, and to do what we could to promote our views - if only on the plane of hand-to-hand circulation. As a matter of fact we had trouble distributing the copies of the paper we had, because it was quite risky to circulate it. I don't know if any copies of this paper are in existence in Vancouver. It was called **Socialist Appeal** *(actually, it was called **Socialist Action** - see selection of articles on home page - ed).* But we have copies in the centre and this material has all been microfilmed and we will be able to send you a complete record of the journal of that time - there was quite an interest in the student movement of this period, and there are copies in libraries in Toronto *(. . .)* we could prepare a film on it.

The leadership of our movement didn't come through too well in this period, either. Then Executive Secretary of our movement was Earle Birney - I wonder if any of you know of him - one of Canada's most eminent poets, he was the leader of our movement; he was the Executive Secretary, a sort of custodian at that time, because as the war approached. I`m a little at a loss how far I should go, not having my previous talk`s notes. At the time of entrism, which we carried out into the CCF in 1936-1937, some of the top leaders of our movement went into a period of inactivity - Maurice Spector and Jack MacDonald went down to the United States - so there was a problem of leadership in our movement, and Birney - who was a top intellectual at the time - later he wrote a historical novel on this period called **Down the long table** which gives a bit of the picture of the times - he later recruited Joe Hansen *(a leader in the SWP)* in Salt Lake City, Birney did, and he came into contact with the Trotskyist movement there and came back to Canada, and participated *(. . .)* - but his role in our movement *(was shaped by his association with leading SWPers)* Schachtman and Burnham, who, as the war approached, came to revise their previous positions of defence of the Soviet Union, in other words, in opposition to the War. And he (Birney) just disappeared, and the older comrades that were around him were not able to hold the fort; with the responsibility of maintaining the movement falling down to the second layer of comrades, and I was one of them.

An activist, that's just what I was, just an activist. I was active in the movement with other comrades, I went out and distributed the paper and sell subs; I had never written anything for the movement; I had never spoken for the movement except on a few street-corners, and with my limited qualifications (nevertheless) all responsibility for the movement fell back to comrades such as myself, and we responded as best we could, and we sustained the movement. This was at the centre; I am not talking about Vancouver, because they had Ruth and Reg (Bullock) particularly at that time. That was the situation in the centre (Toronto). In Vancouver and other areas where we had

comrades, those relations were smashed. The authorities were scrutinizing the correspondence going to and from the West Coast, and for a whole period we had no contact with one anther; we were cut off from Vancouver and other centres. And that continued until I made a trip across Canada.

I went across Canada and I met most of the comrades whom I had never met before, and we started to pull together, to revive the movement, and to talk about the possibilities which we knew were going to come out of the War. As a matter of fact, one thing that sustained us was our conviction, not only of the victory of the workers state and the Red Army against the Hitler forces of the invasion, but also our conviction that there was a revolutionary ferment and culture developing in Europe, and out of this conflict would come some victories in the European theatre for the socialist revolution. As far as the union situation was concerned, we anticipated of course a revival of militancy on the part of the Canadian working class. And that's how our movement could grow, on the conviction of the coming crisis, on our overall evaluation of post-war developments.

Canadian Trotskyists plan a public conference before the end of the War

Well there was a whole period of holding on, and I don't want to go into the details of it - the difficulties of it. I will take us further forward to the preparations for the close of the War by our movement. We had by now revived our connections with comrades across the country. There was a small group of comrades in Vancouver; there was a small group of comrades in Montreal, and a scattering of comrades at several other points - a few comrades in Lloydminster (Alberta) and that was what made up the structure of the movement. By November 1944 we were able to call a conference together of these forces, after that considerable period of four years of great difficulty to sustain any kind of connection whatsoever of any kind of operation. That opportunity was (facilitated) by the fact that some of our comrades in Vancouver and a couple of other places now maintained connections within the union movement and had become delegates from their local to the CCL (Canadian Congress of Labour) convention in Montreal. I happened to be in the army by that time, stationed in Three Rivers and I was able to get to where the comrades were, in Montreal, for that convention. There is a rather interesting report of this convention [illegible] the situation was getting more favourable to operate, and one of the reasons for that convention was the conviction that the delegates had to take on the no-strike pledge the labor brass were able to impose on the unions as a ban on strikes for the duration of the war but ... *(much of the following is garbled or inaudible -ed.)* ...but many resisted that and it never committed itself to a no-strike pledge (. . .) despite some militant struggles, it did not, and it was not able to make a pledge on behalf of the workers to the employers (. . . thereby assuring that) the conditions of the Canadian working class would not have deteriorated as drastically as it would have otherwise in this period of extensive and deep class-collaboration, contributed heftily to by the Communist Party. At this time the CP leadership had been released from prison and joined the ranks of the social- patriots (swinging in behind) the war effort and behind the no-strike pledge and all kinds of pacts of peace and no-wage- increase contracts. With the release of the CP leadership there was all kinds

of campaigning in Quebec and other parts of Canada for conscription (. . .) conscription for overseas service. Sometimes when you have the chance you should check a back file of **Labor Challenge** for a very extensive article on "how the Canadian workers went to war." The working class of this country opposed the War all during the War (...) and it wasn't just the Quebec workers who made up the antiwar opposition.

At that time, in 1944, when we held our congress at the same time (as the CCL) some of our comrades came in from (. . .) and one who came from Prince Rupert (BC), Paddy Stanton, was one of the delegates at that (CCL) convention. He was the president of the Prince Rupert Labor Council and president of the Woodworkers' local. And he made one or two speeches at that congress. One of his speeches opposed the no-strike pledge; I can't remember the vivid way that he expressed it, it's recorded in his Obituary; he is now dead, one of the pioneers of our movement; but anyway it was to the effect that the workers weren't going to commit themselves to a no-strike pledge, they weren't going to give up the right to strike, and he attacked the Communist Party for their policy and he paid tribute to (. . .) who made the greatest profit in history, in the midst of a war *(cheers and laughs from the audience -ed.)*. (. . .) The workers didn't respond to that speech by making the revolution on the basis of that speech, but they didn't support the no-strike pledge.

After that convention we held a preliminary conference of the core of comrades who had come to that convention and other comrades in the East who were able to come down to it, and they laid the basis for the re-formation of our movement, in November 1944. In the Spring of 1945 we announced our public press. We came out boldly, and we launched our paper called **Labor Challenge.** At the time we came out with the first issue of that paper, we were not at all sure that we would be picked up and thrown into the hoosegow or not; we went ahead anyway. The War Measures Act was still in force; the war was still on, the war was in the European theatre but as you probably know, the Canadian government was not content to win the war in Europe; we were asked to stand behind our allies, the American imperialists, and move into the Japanese theatre, and the pressure was on for the Canadian troops who were only committed to fight the war in Europe, to go active in the war against Japan. Not many of them did, but at that time the war was still a full-blooded operation, the flow of blood to be sure on the Japanese front - and we launched that paper right about that time- but we didn't know what would happen when we launched it.

We wanted to exercise some care because we wanted to function, we wanted to get something with our ideas. For instance, in the first issue we talked about the responses of the troops to the victories in Europe and the actions among the Canadian troops for a return to Canada and for their being released from army work, and the air force and the navy of course. We reported the important strikes that had taken place among the Canadian troops, one that one of our comrades, Hugh Dowson, was involved in as an airman in England, another that I was involved in, in Canada, a strike among the Canadian armed forces. We were starting to develop this, and starting to present a history of the class struggle that had taken place during this war period, and to present a picture of the struggles in Europe during the war, the struggles of the Greek revolutionaries. And we started to deal with the political issues in Canada, and of course as we came out in this period the CCF was undergoing a tremendous growth.

Among the youth, among the troops, right off, we issued a very important statement to the workers of this country, (while) the headline of the CP paper at this time was "Hail the victory" - victory of course would lead to stable development of relations, and community and society, housing, and whatever was anticipated by the workers and was promised by the bourgeoisie - this was going to come with the dropping of the H-bomb - the genocidal blow against the Japanese people. And the dropping of the H-bomb was hailed as you probably know, by the Communist Party, in their press, "Drop the bomb against the Jap Warlords," they said in their press, they didn`t talk about the Japanese people - only against the Jap Warlords - in the headlines in their paper.

Labor Challenge is launched: "THERE IS NO PEACE"

We came out in our paper saying "There is **no peace** -- now there will be another war" *(. . .)* and "Let the workers take power" - this was 1945. Everybody else was talking about "hundreds of years of peace" *(laughter from the audience)*- that`s what everybody else was talking about - and we said: "There will be no peace until the workers take power in this country."

And, we developed our paper as quite an important factor I think at that time in the radicalization process of the Canadian workers - and there was a profound radicalization (how much time do I have?) At any rate **?** as memorable at this time (**?**.) it was not quite so dramatic as the Winnipeg General Strike, or on quite so broad a scale as the repercussions of the Winnipeg General Strike across America, but quite important; as a matter of fact, important sectors of the Canadian workforce were organized during the course of the war, to a large degree because of class collaboration. The employers were seeking class peace and as the CCF and the CP attempted to move forward and sink some roots, they acquired certain types of contracts, and many the CIO unions were organized during the war. I would say that unlike the situation in the United States, the industrial working class in this country were not organized in the first wave of the CIO in the late thirties; but they were only organized in the process of the war - and, the unions in this country were built to some degree on the basis of class collaboration.

What was going to happen to this union movement? There was no doubt about it that the Canadian bourgeoisie were out to smash it. Completely destroy it, and throughout there were a series of confrontations on the biggest fronts of the organized labor movement. In the Ford plant, in the Ford strike of 1945, in my opinion was one of the most revolutionary strikes in the history of Canada. You can look back on the pages (of **Labor Challenge**) of that time and see that the Canadian workers set up barricades in Windsor - modern barricades, not the old-fashioned barricades with paving blocks *(audience laughs)* and manhole covers and things like that; they made barricades of automobiles and trucks. At that time I was stationed in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Some of the fellows I was in the army with were sons of Ford workers, and believe it or not, in the camp that I was in, there was open talk by the brass that they were going to send us, Canadian troops, in to help break the Ford strike. But I guess they had to re-think this because there was open talk among some of the fellows I was with that if they went down to Windsor and their old man was on the picket line, they`d take the gun and give it to their old man *(big*

laughter) - they openly talked that way. At any rate, they never sent the troops; they sent the RCMP and some hand-picked troops of course that didn`t reflect the level of consciousness and understanding of the workers, but were a select gang; and they sent the RCMP in. The RCMP were preparing to smash that strike, and at a very critical juncture of the struggle, the workers moved out, commandeered cars, buses, trucks and took their own cars and drove them down the main street that paralleled the major shops and they just jammed that whole street and the intersection with cars and buses all parked kitty-corner - an impenetrable barricade - and the RCMP couldn`t get in and get the scabs in. And we had a very modern revolutionary technique develop in that struggle. Very impressive.

The battle to consolidate the great Canadian industrial unions won after the War

That struggle was the first where the workers declared their determination to hold on to what gains they`d made. On the other front was the steel mill in Hamilton, the Stelco plant. At that time that local was a very weak local, formed in a period of class collaboration. When the strike was called, in the first period of the slowdown, there were more scabs in the plant than there were strikers out on the street. The relationship of forces was not favourable [illegible] and there was great doubt what would happen in that struggle. But that struggle was a very important one, too. First, the workers set up a very militant picket-line; they won the support of the railway workers who wouldn`t take goods out or take goods into the plant while the bosses tried to keep the plant in operation. The scabs were serviced by helicopters. You see with our knowledge of new techniques, and I think that was probably one of the first times that aircraft had been used to bring in supplies for scabs - strikebreakers. They had an airfield in the middle of a gigantic plant, in the middle of Hamilton. At any rate the employers tried to mobilize scabs against this strike, but the climate wasn`t too favourable for that; they attempted to send the troops in, in mufti, who were taking trades courses in the Hamilton area, but these fellows came out in solidarity and joined the picket-line. And there were many demonstrations of militancy on the part of workers in the East which I am sure was duplicated across the rest of Canada.

But the main two battles took place in Hamilton and Windsor and the labor movement came out of that struggle vastly armed for subsequent struggles. And we had aside from these two defensive actions, a wave of a couple of years, a wave of struggles with the workers in strikes right across the country, involving woodworkers, in Mine-Mill and the Pulp and Paper workers - all the major sectors of the working class in gigantic struggles which involved without precedent large wage increases, and other key struggles which consolidated the organized labor movement.

The foundation of the Trotskyist RWP

Okay, so we launched our press, and we started to move out in this milieu - very favourable milieu. Workers were going to the left, and we organized ourselves as the Revolutionary Workers Party, Canadian section of the 4th International.

Up until then we had been working in the CCF - working in the CCF. We went back into the CCF during the war because we needed some area to work, in a milieu where we could put forward some of our views. But the radicalization was taking place outside the CCF - all this big wave of union struggles took place completely outside of the CCF. The CCF was limited to the House of Commons, passing laws and *(. . .)* you know, but the workers were out in the streets, battling against the bosses. So we went out, with our small revolutionary cadre, into this big wave of struggles, and we moved out with this very good base for our press, and we started to make modest progress. We started to undergo a process of differentiation among radicals who had come along, and in the process had become somewhat tired and exhausted and we lost some who had become somewhat tired and exhausted, and who were not prepared for the new problems of the struggle; so some people fell aside, but new elements joined the struggle, important elements, particularly in the union movement in British Columbia, where we recruited a couple of very important unionists - perhaps some of you know them - Lloyd Whalen *(reaction from the audience)* - the name is familiar to you? And Tom Bradley, who died a few years ago; and we recruited some other trade unionists to our movement. However they thought that they were bigger than our movement, and we underwent an experience with Lloyd Whalen - who was caught up thanks to our theory and our ideas and the work of our comrades, our basic cadres, in an extremely favourable situation - in a union situation wide open for our leadership in the Woodworkers. But Whalen thought he knew more than we did, and he came to feel that the movement stood in the way of his taking advantage of the big challenges of the opportunity. But he ended up compromising himself, and compromised this great opportunity. We were unable to convince him, so it was that Whalen went up, and went down just as fast; and a very favourable opportunity was lost to build real strength in the Woodworkers Union.

Reg (Bullock) can some time give us a real picture of that struggle; it was a very interesting struggle; and if we were going to relate that episode in the history of our movement, we would do what Cannon did *(in the case of the exemplary SWP role in the Minneapolis Teamsters` strike -ed.)*. Cannon doesn`t give a logical sequence to this history, but only in part in (his book) the **History of American Trotskyism**, but he gives an illustrative anecdote, that B.J. Field uses with one time relevance to the Lloyd Whalen incident. - the failure of potential revolutionaries to rise to the challenge, and the transformation into the opposite - an exact opposite, an opportunist.

Okay, so we are at the foundation of the RWP, and the attempt to put some fibre on our bones. We were then confronted now with the task of

being part of the mass movement. I think it was one of the American [illegible] leaders who talked about "what our past is" in respect of building mass movements. We are in a perpetual struggle, in a perpetual effort to realize the potential possibilities of mobilizing the mass in broad numbers against capitalism. It`s not a small protest as far as we are concerned, but (we need to) know its ebbs and flows. One of the supreme tasks for revolutionaries is to fuse with those workers who are developing in political consciousness, a political understanding, which of course is a generalization of all the other experiences of the class. And so we were faced again with the CCF, which had become, by 1948, in our opinion, a labor party formation. Up until then, we had found that, in general, that the CCF was a petty- bourgeois primarily agrarian-based political formation. It`s main base was in the Prairie areas of Saskatchewan, Alberta and Winnipeg, and its future - there was a question-mark about it in that respect. But by 1948, coming out of the war, and in great anticipation for the workers of this country, and from the sacrifices they had made in the course of the War, something had been fundamentally changed in Canadian society, and the workers moved towards the CCF.

The CCF grows into the first mass labor party in North America

And by 1948 it was apparent to us, by a series of episodes, that the CCF had become a labor party formation - the first labor party formation on the North American continent. And that fact was a big challenge for us. What would be the attitude of the revolutionary vanguard; how are we going to relate to this vastly important movement? In a sense it becomes a decisive movement for revolutionaries - how to link up with the onward political development of their class. And so we started, shortly after we founded the RWP - a few years after - to discuss this matter. How are we going to resolve this problem? How are we going to link up effectively with the unfolding development, the politicization of the class as a whole, which is going through the CCF.

We started to talk then, about not just our orientation, because we always had an orientation to the CCF, we always identified ourselves with the CCF, even as the Revolutionary Workers Party - how are we going to more extensively link ourselves up with this process? And once again there was a big discussion about this in our movement. And this *(tactic)* is called "entrism," and I had hoped the comrades who are were not involved in the pre-convention discussion of the LSA/LSO just a few months ago, would pick up the documents of our convention. One of the key documents is on the whole development of our movement's policy with regards to the mass political expression of the Canadian working class, and one of the first documents is the document in which we projected the need to make an entry into the CCF. It was that our movement should move in wholly, without any inhibitions and any hedgings or restraints, into the CCF, and fuse our ideas into this movement, with the workers who were most receptive to these ideas.

By 1951 we had completed that discussion in our movement, prepared our forces, and we made an entry into the CCF. That entry meant we gave up our individual independent press, our paper, and we pulled down the banner of our individual organization. It took us some

time to prepare that because we did not have long to carry it out; we wanted to go in united, with a clear understanding of what we were attempting to do, because it is dangerous as everybody knows, to move into the broad level, the broad layers of the working class, without some kind of good protection, and one of the most powerful forms of protection for revolutionaries when they move out into the class generally, is of course the League. What could we do without the League - as socialists? How could we function? -and I am not talking from the point of view of the material resources which have been gathered by these two organizations, but the ideology which is expressed in the title of our movement, its public existence, and the (forces) and unity which are coming together and the force it gives us, and t he unity we have as we got out into the class as a whole. Well we decided to give that up. It is always very important that we have a (��) and sense of unity when we make this entry. And so we took some three years to prepare ourselves for that - when we made this entry.

Well, there were a lot of things happening, of course, we weren't living in a vacuum exactly - we were part of a world movement, and - *(tape ends - sentence continues on next track)*

(Continuation of a speech to the League for Socialist Action, Vancouver)

...at that time there was a big struggle in our international movement. In 1953 Comrade Cannon of the New York centre of the Socialist Workers Party of the United States launched a struggle against a very strong revisionist current that had developed in the world movement and was expressed by the leader of our movement, the Executive Secretary of the Fourth International at that time, Michel Pablo. And we were confronted at that time with a struggle to preserve the basic doctrines of our movement on an international scale, against the revisionist policies of our leadership, at that time. I will give you a thumbnail sketch of what that dispute was about.

Pablo's attempt to liquidate the forces of world Trotskyism

Michel Pablo and the leading cadre of the (4th) International projected the concept that we are headed into the third world war; that the third world war was inevitable, nothing was going to stop it. There was some substance to think that, you know - the bomb was hanging over the world; and the working class movement had not been mobilized to fight against it effectively; the Stalinists and social-democrats were spreading pacifist illusions and were not mobilizing the workers against the war preparations which were going hell-bent. So Pablo and company concluded that we couldn`t stop that war, we were faced with the inevitability of this war. However, he consoled us in this period of great peril, with the idea that out of the war would come the revolution. Some of us were very sceptical; we thought that an H-bomb war would be so devastating that it was doubtful that anything would come out of it - but that`s what the Pablo leadership projected.

That out of the war would come the revolution. But in the meantime, for the Trotskyists, because the process of this struggle would be of such catastrophic circumstances, that you could see that there wouldn`t be time for a period of protest *(. . .)* and the revolution would have to be made by a realignment of revolutionary forces. He projected the idea that all of the Trotskyist formations should integrate themselves into the Communist Parties in those countries where the CPs were a mass movement, or in countries with social-democratic parties, if the social-democratic parties were big movements in their countries. We were told to liquidate ourselves and not worry about trying to build the Trotskyist movement because there was no time for that; and that later Trotskyists would find victory coming out of the nuclear holocaust.

We questioned that *(laughter)*. And most vigorously. The Socialist Workers Party (in the US) most vigorously. The comrades in Vancouver also very vigorously - admittedly they immediately identified themselves as being in solidarity with Cannon`s attacks on this series of concepts; and a little more reluctantly, the central leadership of Toronto also identified themselves with the Cannon position. And so we were confronted with this split in the world movement. But, there was also a split in our own movement, because there were some forces who identified themselves with Pablo`s views. Pablo proceeded to line up the world movement - and he split our movement. The split in B.C. was of no consequence - I think we lost no one *("one person", from the audience)*. In the East we lost some of our cadre in the course of that struggle. But that was an international struggle, and we lined ourselves up with the SWP and the International Committee *(the anti-Pablo caucus of the Fourth International -ed.)*, and from there on, up until 1963, when we and the American comrades played an instrumental role in rectifying, in overcoming the division in the international and succeeded in achieving a re-unification (of the FI) in 1963. *(Ross Dowson's contribution to the international reunification is noted elsewhere --ed)*.

The wave of expulsions of Trotskyists from the CCF

In the process, during the intervening ten years, some of the differences had become minimal, and there was substantial grounds for re-uniting the movement and of course there was tremendous pressure on us to re-unite the movement to meet the new wave of radicalization which was beginning to unfold across the world. We survived that threat without too much difficulty although it was a searing process for our movement (in Canada). *(See the Dowson correspondence elsewhere -ed.)*

Then there was a period of vast expulsions of Trotskyists, of our forces, from the CCF. The Canadian Pabloites turned informers against us for the CCF brass and we were expelled right across the country *(to a question from the audience):* pardon me? well, yes, there were probably incidental expulsions before that, but this was a cross-country expulsion. We weren`t too overly dismayed by that because we had made the decision to move out independently of the CCF at a time when the radicalization was taking place. And here we are talking about the beginning of the process which you are part of. We were starting to pick up layers of the youth who were particularly moving to the left; I was thinking of how the radicalization was first expressed in Canada. I think George Novack, rather George Breitman in particular *(two leading theoreticians of the SWP)* wrote an article recently about the radicalization today, and he makes a comparison with

the radicalization of the Thirties. He tries to define what the point of radicalization was, what vital questions - to try to get the feeling of the time. I would think that the first signs of the important radicalization among the youth that we were aware of was the first demonstrations around *(the fight for Black integration, in the late Fifties -ed.)* in Selma. These are the first ones I remember, that were significant, that started to take place outside of us, and we started to bring in the youth, particularly the campus youth, into action. At any rate this radicalization process was starting to take place.

We started to prepare to meet it, to move out, and to show that our movement was a public movement, first in the East, under the name of the Socialist Educational League and in the West later under the name of the Socialist Forum *(actually, the Socialist Information Centre, SIC -ed.*), which we fused in 1961 as the League for Socialist Action. The LSA was founded in actuality in 1961 through the fusion of our League component parts in the East and the West a few years before that . The foundation of the League took place at the very time of one of the most auspicious developments in the Canadian labor field. And that was the formation of the NDP (New Democratic Party).

We consider the development of the NDP to be the most significant that has taken place in Canadian labor politics up until that time. It was the synthesis of the pulling together of the forces that were radicalizing, coming out of the whole radicalizing process, the remnants of the CCF, under the signature of the two major Canadian labor bodies - these forces came together to launch the NDP. And we decided we needed an organization, built along Bolshevik lines, open and public, appearing as adhering to the working class, and identifying itself with its formations. We wanted to project ourselves as the left wing of the New Democratic Party. We felt that this was a great opportunity to intercede in this radicalization process, and in our opinion, and for a couple of years, the fate of the New Democratic Party (which was) to become a reformist movement in the classic meaning of the word, was by no means determined. But I am sure I am over my time on this; I think the comrades should refer to the (record of internal) bulletins in which we had developed our whole concept of entrism, which was the evolving orientation of our movement to the labor party formation.

That was the main problem of this whole period - how to adjust ourselves to the radicalizing process expressed in labor politics through the CCF and later the NDP. The next stage in the history of our movement, and I think this tape will have to stop here, as I see the time, the next stage is "the Trotskyists learn the art of politics" *(laughs respond)* because that`s the problem, you know; we are a very small group and the radical movement is an ongoing process, you don`t have to know anything about real politics, as it is classically known. You meet these young people, and they want to know about the history of the class struggle; they want to learn Marxist theoretical concepts, which are the accumulated essence of previous struggles; they want to have a world view; they are not satisfied with some basic rudimentaries; these are very complex concepts; and the youth need to figure out what life's about and where they fit into it, what the problems of society are - and for a long time that's what the Trotskyists were about, that's what they were doing, they were trying to pull together cadre, which was coming out of relatively sophisticated experiences. Basically we were recruiting to our movement, particularly those who came out of other political movements - they came out of the Communist Party, where they had learned some of the great lessons of the October Revolution, and felt the impact of Stalinism, and came to Trotskyism. They were of a number that could

be counted on our hands. Then there were the workers who were going through the experiences of the CCF and the NDP reformism, and getting some awareness of how inept and inadequate tools their reformist theory is, and who found satisfaction in a revolutionary socialist and internationalist class-struggle concepts.

The youth radicalization brings a breakthrough for Trotskyism

But now we have an opportunity which all revolutionaries seek. And for the first time, the Trotskyist movement was faced with the challenge of how to work in an ongoing process of radicalization. And that's the period I would say started around 19-oh, I would say 19- well with the death of Stalin (1953) it started to develop the Krushchev revelations of the Moscow Trials shattering the CP; the beginning of the political revolution posed now in Hungary, and then the rise of the Black Liberation

struggle in the United States, the beginnings of the opposition to the War, the imperialist role of America across the world, subsequently in Vietnam - these developments *(other suggestions from the audience)* yes, you are quite right; I wrote it down but I didn't get to it. These processes started to create a totally different climate in this country. New young forces, forces which never had been in the Communist Party, never been corrupted, never had to be de-educated and re-educated in that sense, young new revolutionaries, potential new revolutionaries, coming out of these experiences, coming out of the CCF and NDP () in fact, the entire leadership cadre of the first layers of the NDY, of which Gary is a part, and Dick (F) is a part, and John (R) We started to win this new cadre - the leading cadre of our movement now, are those elements that came out of that process. The cream of that process. They came to our movement because our movement started to learn the art of revolutionary politics.

We met the challenge - it presented some challenges, around the question of what we mean by a Bolshevik party; but we were always convinced that no party could make the revolution unless it understood why a Bolshevik party is required for a revolution to take place; and what that meant; (how it could) grasp these developments and identify itself with them, and become part of this radicalizing process *(this passage reconstructed from unclear recording).*

At any rate, I think we have started to learn the art of politics as the process continues to unfold. A few years ago nobody would have talked about the women's liberation movement. Not that this question presented a terrible problem for us. In the past our movement has been women's liberationist - always has been. We've always had women in the leadership of our movement; we've always been sensitive not to project ourselves in some sexist terms; but that was a minor reflection of pressures on our movement. Our movement with its revolutionary Marxist theory was well prepared for the rise of the women's liberation movement, (. . .) but it became part of the radicalization process. And I think I will just drop it there, on that tone. We showed that in the process of the long struggle... most of us were not born when it started; some of us maturing in the process - in getting involved - in spite of all these difficulties, we prepared for

the new layers of youth coming onto the arena, who have showed that they have assimilated some of the basic ideas of Trotskyism, and were capable of handing it on, to you, and to those who are standing outside the door, which you have to bring in, to build this revolutionary vanguard party.

(ends to extended applause).
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"The nature of our internationalism" (1970 - Part 3)

A historical review of the Split in the Fourth International from 1953 to 1963)& (Portion of a mid-series speech to the League for Socialist Action educational forum, Toronto)

- Building a team leadership in the Canadian Trotskyist movement
- Pablo engineers a split throughout the International
- The Canadian concept of "entrism" vs. Pablo's entry "sui generis"
- Dump "old Trotskyism" at a time of East German revolt and Stalinist betrayal of general strikes?
- The Cuban Revolution and the Black uprising in the USA buoy Trotskyist re-unification
- Q. & A. period: Ross Dowson on the Rose Group in Toronto

Well comrades, since there were quite a few comrades who weren't at the first forum which led into this, the first educational, I should say a few words on how we come to deal with the question we're going to deal with - it's not exactly the most burning issue before the world proletarian revolution - at any rate, we had an internal educational here about four weeks ago, which was a rather complex one, and I will just try and summarize it, and which led to this topic.

The topic was, the nature of **our** internationalism; the internationalism of revolutionary socialists, and its pivotal character in the program of the League for Socialist Action/Ligue Socialiste Ouvriere; and I referred in the course of the talk to a leaflet that had been distributed at the Forum here a couple of Friday nights before by a group of persons who call themselves Trotskyists and who are organizing a

conference in Montreal in the next week or so that was going in some way to determine the organization of a Canadian section of the 4th International. And so I talked about what that group was. That group was you might say the nucleus - I hope its an abortion - *(laughs from audience)* of a Canadian section of the Healyite International. And in the course of that talk, I had to say a few words about the origin of this group which has now appeared on the Canadian scene.

And of course we also discussed the latest development of that group, of the "International Committee of the 4th International," so-called, which has taken place, that has resulted in the expulsion of the Lambert group, the French wing of the International Committee, by Healy, from the I.C. for revisionism, and its support of the Lora group - in Spanish, the POR, the "Revolutionary Workers Party" of Bolivia. Well, that's a little background. From there it opened up into a report from where the discussion that is taking place in our world movement is, at present.

So, the comrades thought that we should have a discussion about some of the detailed examination of the division that took place in the world movement in 1953, out of which came, in a devious way, the International Committee, that's got a wing now in Montreal and that is calling itself the Canadian Trotskyist movement. I would like to say a few words of a general character first though, before I take up this experience, because I didn't want to repeat dates and roles of various individuals - much of it is sort of lost in history - I want to comment on what I consider are the more important experiences.

Well you know often in our movement we talk about building a team leadership - a group of revolutionaries, male and female, who know how to work together, know how to build a movement in an effective way. That's something we aspire to establish in our movement - in the branches, the locals, and in the central leadership too - to build a team leadership. We want to realize it consciously, we want to gear ourselves to overcome any centripetal or centrifugal tendencies that might exist in the movement - cliquism, personal relations that establish cliquism, or (personal) conflicts, we want to build a team leadership. Well you can begin to realize it consciously by being aware of some of the problems in general; but really such a leadership can only be built in the process of common experiences - real experiences. For instance when we try and do it consciously, of course we try to examine someone's previous experiences - the experiences of some individuals among us. So in reality that proves that a team leadership can be forged only through the process of a common experience in the building of the revolutionary vanguard.

In a team leadership, in the leadership of a serious revolutionary vanguard group, there has to be an extensive area of agreement on the essentials of the program, naturally, everybody understands that, but there also has to be an extensive area of agreement on the strategy and tactics of the movement - to realize that program, to build flesh and blood around the program. And there has to be a capacity among the components of this leadership to sort out the relative weight of things - how to function, how to operate. Really, that's the importance of history in the movement, I think; when the comrades often press me about writing the history of the Canadian movement, I understand that that's what they want; they want to know - what is the collective experience of our movement.

Building a team leadership in the Canadian Trotskyist movement

Not just where we come from, in an academic way, but they want to know what the experience of this **team** is. Now of course the team's got wide gaps of experience - wide gaps of experience not only in the revolutionary socialist movement, (but also) in the class movement, you know, through age and a whole series of factors. Many women have been deprived of it because only now many women are entering in, in an effective way, into the struggle. So I assume that's what we mean about studying the history of the movement. We want to know what the collective consciousness, the collective experience, of this operation is here; in this case, the Toronto branch, or the total of the movement. What is its collective experience; what is its tradition?

Even with the common program, which I think we have substantially here, to varying degrees of assimilation but we all have a fairly clear concept of the program; even with that, a cadre can really only be built - and that's what we want this movement to be, a cadre movement - can only be built on the basis of common experience. Well, you get this experience by advancing your program against the capitalist class, fighting for your ideas against the main enemy - the enemy which is trying to split you up, that's trying to block you from promoting your views effectively and on behalf of the class, the working class - and in the common experience of taking on, in combat, in struggle, with those who are contending with us for the leadership of the working class. You can only develop that experience too, a real serious experience, on the basis of having that type of struggle in your background - taking on the NDP leadership, taking on the Canadian Maoists, their various stripes, taking on the Canadian Liberation Movement, the Waffle, all other forces - that's necessary, to develop a common experience. And of course a common experience in building the party is necessary - but they're all sort of interlocked. There has to be a relationship of mutual respect and confidence that can only come through a common experience in a cadre. So the history of the movement is that common experience.

Well, this year we are celebrating ten years of the LSA/LSO. But as you know the movement started earlier than that and at Waterloo we talked about the 50th anniversary of our movement. *(. . .)* Well, I just threw out a few pages here because I see I am taking up too much time.

The revolutionary vanguard party is built not only through the molecular process of individual recruits - that's the experience most of us have come through - the movement has had over the past couple of years a steady recruitment of new elements who have come into an operation - an operation that is already structured, has a leadership, has established personalities, and everybody comes with a much more limited experience, and they come to pick up that experience. And that's one method of development of the revolutionary vanguard. But it also comes to birth, and to strength, and to power, which is our projection of course, in the leadership of the working class, through a combined process, of divisions, of splits, and of unifications. They are part of the life of a revolutionary movement. Splits are part of the life of a revolutionary movement. Intense differences develop, and lead to schisms in the movement, and also unifications - they're part of the process of the building and development of a movement.

No revolutionary vanguard party in our mind can ever be built by the slow process of accruing - the molecular process of adding this person and that person. For instance there are other forces contending with us for the leadership of the proletariat in this country. Well, there is going to be a split in the NDP, that's for sure; there's going to be splits or unfortunately, it looks like there is going to be a dissipation of the Communist Party cadre - a continual dissipation of them. But there are going to be this type of experiences with regards to other formations, and I think we can be sure that there are going to be splits and unifications in our own movement. Now, we're not looking for such an experience - a split, we're not looking for such a split. We have a concept of loyalty to our movement, and the importance of the movement, and the importance of ideas, and the importance of the achievements of the movement so far. But the history of the movement is a history, in some senses, of splits.

And what the comrades want to talk about is the 1953 split which was part of the last educational. This was the most sensational split, you might say, that's taken place in our world movement in many decades. I heard about it myself by reading pages of the (US-SWP) **Militant**. One day the **Militant** came to our office, on Elm Street at that time, and it contained a public announcement by comrade Cannon and the leadership of the SWP - that they had launched an international tendency, and they were appealing to all sections of the Fourth International to examine their appeal. Their appeal was in a sense a projection of war - political war of course - against the current that (was led by) the then leaders of the international movement, particularly around one Michel Pablo, who was the International Secretary.

Pablo engineers a split throughout the International

The general charge made by the SWP in this public statement in the Militant was that Pablo had launched a drastic series of revisions against our program - by now you know the term "Pabloite revisionism" that Healy and others used so much. They accuse us of being Pabloite revisionists, although the SWP, later with our support, launched the first struggle against what was called "Pabloite revisionism." That was the revision of our program. Also, it was a struggle launched against organizational manipulation of the movement, against the dissipation of cadre.

Now I dealt with this in a document that was presented to the 1969 convention - in that orange-colored document that contains all the documents of the convention of 1969. That document was called "Our orientation to the NDP, the strategy and its tactical application." And in that document I took up to a fair extent, one aspect of Pablo's concepts that was insinuated into the movement - (Pablo had) not openly declared and projected (this concept) into the movement, so that there could be a rounded and open, and honest discussion and exchange of experiences, and then a decision by the movement - (so) I took up (this) aspect of Pablo's revisionism, and this was the concept of entrism. This document deals with entrism, so it takes up that one aspect of Pablo's views. Pablo, around the same time as the Canadian movement was making an entry into the CCF, in 1952, projected a concept of entrism, a little different than ours at the time.

We were just talking about the tasks in Canada, and we made a very detailed and very concrete analysis of the nature of the NDP - the CCF at that time, pardon me - and what our objective was, and why we should move towards entrism. That document became sort of notorious because it was picked up by the CCF and widely circulated in the CCF *(. . .)*

At any rate, we thought it was a document of high security, because we wanted to talk among ourselves about what we were going to do with regards to the CCF. And we prepared for an entry in 1952. Our analysis was based on a specific analysis of the situation in Canada - well, of course, not abstracted out of the world, but it was a very concrete examination of the realities before **us**, in our work to build the revolutionary vanguard in **this** country. But Pablo had another concept in his entrism - he called it "entry 'sui generis'" which means entrism of a unique type, a particular type - he just added that on; nobody really knew what that meant, except it wasn't exactly the entrism that Trotsky had projected earlier, which I dealt with in that document, and the comrades should read it because I can't take it all up.

At any rate his concept of entry was entry as an international strategy - sounds a little familiar when I saw it - *(here Ross may be referring to the then current debate in the Fourth International over it's European leadership proposing guerrilla warfare in Latin America as a continental strategy, and not a tactic --ed.)* He wasn't content with making an analysis of a specific situation, you know, in this country or that country - but as a strategic concept, entrism, primarily in Europe of course because it was there that the mass reformist or mass social-democratic parties (existed); but I remember when I wrote that document Pablo sent us a particular communication, a personal communication, saying that he thought the document was a very well-conceived document; and that he was 100% in support of our entrism - In Canada. But his concept of entrism was somewhat different than ours, as subsequent events proved.

For instance, in that document, that I referred to, the document that was adopted at the 1969 convention, I summarized this aspect of the dispute in 1953. I summarized it in this way: that two leading comrades in the Canadian movement started to give a different interpretation of entrism - an interpretation that we had never had in our own thinking in our decision to carry out entrism - it was this entrism as a strategic concept. It was summarized by four points: one, they said - this is the Canadian Pabloites - they said that the third world war is on us, now, immediately, in a very short term projection. It is inevitable, and its very very close upon us; and so therefore, two: the present alignments that now exist within the working class movement - in France, the Communist Party is the mass party of the working class, in Britain the British Labour Party, and in Canada I assume, the CCF - these alignments are those in which the workers are going to remain in, as they go into the war, as the world goes into the third world war. (Therefore, Pablo concluded,) all Trotskyists must enter these organizations, everywhere - this was the broad strategical concept (by dissolving all independent Trotskyist organizations - ed.) Out of the impact of this world war, which we also knew was going to be a nuclear war, out of this holocaust would come and realignment of forces, and a revolutionary party would be forged with the Trotskyists playing a key role in this process - that`s how it was presented.

Now of course that immediately projected that way among the comrades to some serious questioning, by the Canadian comrades. Well, for instance, how can you be sure what the timetable of the third world war is? Can nothing stop it - is it just an established fact? Are there no forces or other factors which might intervene? So this was questioned, as I reported in that document. We questioned whether the timetable was accurate - that would be quite important you see, if the war is right on you, then of course what comes upon you is a whole series of decisions, but if a series of events can unfold, and the war is postponed even though you may say, yes, it is inevitable; so some new alignments can take place. Just from that, the process of time being available - as a matter of fact a whole series of events could take place that could alter the superiority in France of the Communist Party, or the hegemony of the Labour Party in Great Britain; a whole series of events could take place. There could be a series of crises, with new opportunities and openings for the Trotskyists. So those were important reservations that any serious person would make, and those were made by leading comrades in our movement, against those who supported Pablo`s entry "sui generis" in the Canadian section.

The Canadian concept of "entrism" vs. Pablo's entry "sui generis"

We were also told in passing of course that this concept of entry "sui generis," although we didn`t know it, was firmly embedded in a series of documents that we had adopted at a World Congress a few years before. Quite firmly embedded, but nobody knew it at the time but we were now told it was there, had been in there, and now we had to abide by it. And we didn`t accept that idea. This was the one aspect that I dealt with in the document around our experience with the big schism that broke out in the world movement in 1953. That was only one aspect of it; it was highly relevant to the discussion on our orientation to the CCF of course, and it would be quite a key and fundamental difference; if there was a difference in the world movement on this concept of entry "sui generis." However this was not the most common basis of the split, a division in the world movement. As a matter of fact it took on a whole series of aspects. As I said, we heard about it in the (US-SWP) **Militant**, but of course obviously there had been a process at work prior to that, in the American party primarily. And there had been developing an understanding of what this process was in the American party, among the Vancouver comrades. For instance, when the announcement came in the **Militant** we were completely unprepared for it in the centre but the Vancouver comrades were well tuned for it, apparently they had a continuing connection with the SWP through Seattle, and they were following a dispute that was taking place in the American party. And that was part of the international dispute.

I want to develop some other aspects of it - comrade Peng, whose statement I came across - here`s how he characterized that dispute: it split the world movement down the middle. He said that this was really unprecedented in the history of our international movement, and it is an action of a revolutionary nature. This action has become necessary not only to crush Pablo`s attempt at usurpation, but also to gain

time in which to rescue the movement. Comrade Morris Stein, then organization secretary of the SWP said: this amounts to the resurrection of Trotskyism. So, this is how they visualized this schism that split the movement apart, into two tendencies that didn`t come back together again for ten years. So, a few words about this. Well, it was broader than just entrism and as I say this didn`t figure in the American thinking of the question at all. It had a very concrete application. It developed around, in the American thinking, and in the international experience, around some other points that were part of this world strategy that Pablo put forward of the coming world showdown. For instance, it revealed itself in the American dispute and subsequently in a draft resolution of the International Secretariat called "The rise and decline of Stalinism," it revealed itself with the concept that Stalinism could no longer betray. That concept was projected and insinuated in a series of documents of the world movement; that the relationship of world forces had now developed on such a scale, knowing of course that Stalinism is the result of the decay and isolation and the degeneration of the Revolution primarily, with the upsurge of the revolutionary process; this concept that Stalinism could no longer betray was injected into our movement. And of course you can see that this would have some considerable effect on persons who had entered into the Communist Party of France - that Stalinism can no longer betray. It even projected the concept, in this dispute, put forward by Pabloite supporters, particularly George Clarke, who is known to some comrades - a leading American comrade; he wrote a document in which he projected the idea of self-reform of the Soviet bureaucracy - not only could it not betray, due to revolutionary pressures on a broad scale, but in the Soviet Union itself, the bureaucracy was in the process of self- reform. And of course, that dumped the whole concept of political revolution, which had been an integral part of Trotskyist program.

Now that led into an evaluation of the East German uprising. As perhaps you know, the first big sign of the developing political revolution in soviet areas, took place in 1953 - in Germany, when the German working class burst out in a violent struggle and led a big attack against the bureaucracy of the East German Communist Party and against the Soviet Union which of course sent its army in to quash the struggle. That's what Jacquie referred to the forum the other night on Brecht's play, with the plebeians rehearsing the uprising; she was referring to the '53 uprising. Well, in a document that came out of the world leadership dealing with the East German uprising, to everyone's surprise they found that there was no concept of a free and independent socialist Germany projected. As a matter of fact there was a call for entry into the Communist Parties in the Soviet areas, at the very time that these CPs were being unsprung, and of course many of the leaders of these Communist Parties were being (eliminated) - some of them were shot down - by workers in the uprising. Some of them *(the CP leaders)* joined the struggle, but the party was sprung apart. And here was a situation where the international documents came to our attention without projecting the classical concepts of our movement when we thought that the general experiences of this period were re-affirming in the most powerful way, our concept of the political revolution *(in the " workers' states," as our movement characterized the satellite states, the Soviet Union and China -ed..)* What was the East German revolution if it wasn't the political revolution? What did it tell us about the Communist Parties - they were standing athwart the most elementary strivings of the masses and were instruments of the bureaucracy even though elements had sprung away from these parties.

Dump "old Trotskyism" at a time of East German revolt and Stalinist betrayal of general strikes?

Then there was another big experience, the big general strike in France and the other thing that was noted by some of the French comrades was the failure of the international leaders' documents on this strike to not attack the Stalinists, which of course was a leading factor, just as it was in the 1968 betrayal of the general strike - well it was a leading factor in the strike of 1953 as the mass party in the mass industrial proletariat. And there were no formulations or line in those documents which attacked the Stalinists and their treacherous role in the struggle. So you can see that there was a revision of a whole series of our concepts, and they were summed up perhaps most clearly by comrade George Clarke who was the leader of the tendency in the SWP in a speech in which he developed the theme that we had to junk the "old Trotskyism." Well of course the old Trotskyists weren't prepared to junk the old Trotskyism, which they thought was being vindicated all down the line, and it was a big challenge for us to take advantage of the difficulties of the Soviet bureaucracy, to lay the basis for the political revolution and to build the revolutionary vanguard in France and to expunge from our program any projections of the concept of self-reform of the Soviet bureaucracy.

There was of course along with this an attack against Pablo's usurpation of his position and authority in the International. Pablo developed the idea that the International Secretariat, which is a sub-committee of the World Congress, the International Executive Committee, that it had (an authority) that was higher than the national (authority) of sections. He developed this concept, through a series of incidents, and I will just mention a couple of them. Okay, well, the leading comrade in the British Section at that time was Comrade Healy. Healy developed some differences with an important document at the International Secretariat and he was instructed to carry the line of the IS where he was voted down and not reveal his own position before his own national section, of which he was Executive Secretary. He was told that the authority of the IS had higher priority than the commitment of the comrade to the national section, and he was to suppress his own views in the (British) international section as he was a member of the IS. And we didn't buy that - nobody in the world movement bought that. There was also another experience that came to our attention later - we didn't know what it was at first - but two years earlier, in January 1952, Pablo transformed the leadership of the French section, from a majority into a minority. He imposed what we would call in the union movement a "trusteeship," in the French section. There was a majority that was in the leadership of the French section, and Pablo attended a Plenum of the Executive Committee of the French party and he announced the suspension of the 16 majority members of this Executive Committee - just announced the suspension and put the minority in control. This caused a considerable ruckus in the international because he had done this without even the agreement of the IS. When it was brought up in the IS, and Pablo developed another device whereby he developed a parity concept in a retreat to the opposition, and put Comrade Germaine, who had protested this, as an arbiter, between the contending forces. At the time the American comrades who were apparently acquainted with this development through their representative in the IS, who did not understand what was involved and thought it was some kind of incapacity of certain persons to work together. But in the light of subsequent events, he revised his opinion, and the French comrades

revealed what had happened in their own section.

Well Pablo did somewhat the same thing in the Canadian Section, and that's documented in the orange-covered Bulletin. It involved the Canadian comrades who supported Pablo - they were in the minority. They claimed about 35% but they had *(. . .)* a much smaller minority than that. But Pablo declared that anybody who in any way supported the SWP "Open Letter" were persons (who were declared) suspended from posts in their sections and from their posts on the IEC. And this involved myself, and it involved Reg Bullock; and this process would have transformed the minority in the Canadian Section into a majority. Now the comrades who supported Pablo in Canada agree with (this) but did not think that it was a practical proposition, and so it was not carried out in Canada in any way. Well, I dealt with that in greater detail in that document.

The Cuban Revolution and the Black uprising in the USA buoy Trotskyist re-unification

At any rate, this difference had broader implications than what I have dealt with in the document, particularly in our orientation to the CCF; it involved our whole concept of the International; it involved the basic thrust of our program along with our concept of entrism. And that difference was so profound that there was no basis for collaboration. In essence it was a split: while the American comrades launched "the International Committee" (IC) and got the support of the Canadian leadership, the British, the French, the Swiss, the Danish and I forget - one or two others - with the Ceylonese comrades wavering in between, and declared themselves a tendency that way, the division was so sharp that there was no collaboration. Pablo recognized his supporters in the Canadian Section as the representatives at a subsequent congress of what he called the Fourth International, and that explains to you why when we talk about the congresses (of the FI), we refer to the So-and-so year Congress of the FI we end up by putting into brackets "So and so year congress Since Reunification" since there is a tendency of important parts of the world movement not to recognize the congresses which took place in the interim between the split and re-unification, 1953 to1963.

Well, it so happened that Pablo's projections proved disastrously wrong, for his theory. The war did not come, his timetable was off, and of course in the document re-evaluating entrism, which was not adopted by the last world congress but was only published afterwards, as a re-evaluation of entrism on a European scale - Comrades Mandel (Germaine) and Pierre Frank - these comrades wrote a joint document in which they comment on this erroneous projection - the war didn't come and of course we had a whole series of new revolutionary opportunities, and in the document that deals with entrism we dealt with them, and the challenges that confronted our movement; why we terminated our entrism, why with the new challenges before us we had to (stand clear) of the entrist tactic and retain our orientation, though, to the NDP.

For instance one of them was the Cuban Revolution and the rise of the Black struggle in the United States, and of course the ongoing crisis of Stalinism not just in East Germany but everywhere; the development of powerful forces of opposition in Hungary and now of course in Czechoslovakia, which has transformed the situation in many countries with regards to the elements of the revolutionary leadership. For instance the Communist Party of Canada has gone through a whole series of crises on the basis of the crisis of international Stalinism, particularly the crisis of the Soviet bureaucracy, and its extension into other sectors of the Soviet areas. So there is the crisis of the old political forces, and new revolutionary forces came onto the arena, particularly Cuba, of course. So the projection of Pablo proved erroneous and it so happened there developed a split in the formations of the United Secretariat forces *(of the F.I. -ed.*) that is, the Pabloite wing of Trotskyism, developed a wide split. For instance, when I went to Europe *(1962 -ed.)* already there were broader and more substantial bases of agreement - on the evaluation of Stalinism and a whole series of things - and we came to the conclusion that there were no real substantial differences and that it was the primary responsibility of all Trotskyists to overcome the disunity in order to face the new opportunities. When I went to Europe I found the Pablo forces had undergone a big split - they didn't tell us at the time, from their side - they very honestly and genuinely met the challenge of reunification. I made a quick tour of the major sections in Europe and I learned very quickly that Pablo was out of the international leadership of the United Secretariat forces; that he had lost his influence; that a new leadership was being structured, primarily around Livio Maitan, Ernest Mandel and Pierre Frank who had not been the key persons in that team operation - and Pabloism was already an isolated current in the United Secretariat forces... and there had been wide divisions that had already developed in various sections over some of the experiences they had had, and of course, and the main factors that brought those comrades to the realization of the need for reunification was the new wave of radicalization which started to hit our movement and give us new opportunities. So the reunification was consummated on the basis of the subsequent experiences which proved Pablo's contentions wrong and laid the political basis for the movement as it is now constituted.

(Applause, followed by an announcement for one half hour period for questions; what follows are two contributions, inaudible, by Myer Shapiro and Vern Olson)

Q. & A. period: Ross Dowson on the Rose Group in Toronto

I won't comment on Vern's contribution, which I agree with... Well Myer is referring to the best, most rounded experience we have had in the Canadian movement, with the formation of an unprincipled combination, I think, and it is dealt with in the orange document; its around what is called the "Rose Group" in the Canadian movement - this is a group of comrades pretty well limited to Toronto; which started to form in the Toronto Branch and which was very difficult for anyone to understand what it's basis was - it disagreed with everything - everything in the movement. The more petty the thing was, the more violent the disagreement was. I remember once we worked our rears off to paint the place, (the headquarters), and when one of the leading comrades of the tendency came in, I asked him

what he thought of the job, expecting a positive response and he turned around and said "who determined the color!" So I was sort of put off, you know. At any rate we had this tendency which started to develop in the movement and it became a bit of a force in the branch. We didn't know how to cope with it - it was a worrisome thing - it led to all kinds of uneasiness among comrades in the Toronto branch. Ultimately I tried to define it, in the interests of the movement. I said "you're a tendency really, you don't call yourself one, and I am going to try to define what you are." I tried to characterize them: they were soft on Stalinism, and they were hard on reformism, on the CCF, which we were entered into at that time.

They were opposed in essence to entry. Ultimately, when we passed the position of entrism, they split. We formally took the position of entrism; formally - you see before then we sent comrades (into the CCF) to get experience in this situation - but when we formally adopted a position of entrism they split from the movement, showing that my general evaluation of the tendency was correct, what this tendency represented. So this current went its own way for a short period, became unionist *(syndicalist, centered solely on non-political union work -ed.)*, minimized the importance of the CCF and maximized the union movement. If you look through the documents, you will see some discussions around the U.E. *(Stalinist-led United Electrical Workers Union -ed.)* and other (union) experiences of that time, and the big factional disputes about the line of the paper (the **Workers' Vanguard**) on some aspects of unionism. They were the hotshots on unionism and they rejected the CCF. So when we took the entry they split away from the movement. But then, that wasn't the end of them, because the Pabloite group very shortly formed a bloc with them, while they were out of the movement and opposed to the movement, the Pabloite current that developed in the movement formed a bloc with them. It's related in that document, a rather sordid thing in which these comrades immediately became the vehicle which the Pabloites demanded be allowed into the movement four days or so before the convention. They wanted to establish them as legitimate Trotskyists, who would have a deciding position in the coming convention, while these persons had not been part of the movement in any way whatsoever

(recording ends)

Fifty Years of Revolutionary Socialism in Canada (1921- 1971) Part 4

(Speech by R.D. found in September 1971)

- If you want to know where you're going
- You have to know where you're coming from.
- How the first Communists became the first Trotskyists.
- The Trotskyists stand up to the Stalinization drive.
- The LSA is carrying on the spirit of '21.

*Ross Dowson at the podium of the Waterloo Socialist Educational Conference, August 20-25, 1971, attended by 274 mainly young workers and students from across Canada (see September 13 issue of **Labor Challenge**):*

What's all this about 50 years of revolutionary socialism - the display in the foyer - with its yellowing group-photo of a Canadian Labor Party convention in 1926 from which blow-ups have been extracted of one Maurice Spector who died three years ago after withdrawing from the Canadian revolutionary movement in the mid-Thirties. Of one Jack MacDonald who died twenty years ago, and Bill Bossovitch whom not one of us here even met personally.

What's all this about a conference held in a barn down the road near Guelph back in 1921 - a barn which we found no longer even exists thanks to expansion of this industrial community.

The average age of the persons in this hall is obviously something in the late teens or early twenties - not only are you of a totally different generation, but probably not even the parents of the majority of you were alive fifty years ago. Some of us are Québécois who have the added problem of identification, since possibly none of the participants spoke French or had anything but the most rudimentary knowledge of the dynamics of Quebec national aspirations.

If you want to know where you're going

What's this got to do with this audience not only a couple of generations removed but with an audience like this that is so obviously with it - so completely clued in on all the ongoing actions of these days.

What relevancy has this event in Guelph 50 years ago to top activists in the anti-Vietnam war movement, to leaders in the campaign for student faculty control of the universities and their integration in the struggles of the communities, to participants in the tenants' rights movement, and to fighters in the expanding movement for women's liberation, to unionists' work to build a new leadership from the floors of the shops... socialists fighting to win the NDP *(New Democratic Party)* to a class struggle program - or for that matter to those of you

who have already cast your lot in with, have dedicated your lives to build the LSA-LSO *(League for Socialist Action-Ligue Socialiste Ouvrière)* or YS-LJS? *(Young Socialists-Ligue des Jeunes Socialistes)*

Besides we are not only needlessly complicating things when we attempt to relate ourselves to this event back in 1921 when the Communist Party of Canada also relates itself to the same event, and we will have to extricate ourselves from all kinds of difficulties such as Stalinism.

The Communist Party of Canada has no real credibility today in any substantial section of the new wave of radicalization of which we are part. Why, it could be well asked, should we the living, the fighting radicals of today get involved, identify ourselves, be at all concerned with this incident of some 50 years ago?

Why don't we start from where we are - many of the new left claim that the past has little if anything to offer - and we should swing free. Or why don't we start from some other point less contended for and possibility more closely connected in the popular mind as signifying something generally good and useful.

It seems to me that this is a matter of some importance and if there had ever been any doubt in my own mind about the correctness of us revolutionaries of today tying in with that kind of revolutionaries who assembled in a barn down the road 50 years ago - the trip up to Waterloo from Toronto would surely have clarified my mind.

We came up from Toronto a few days ago in a big hurry to attend the Saturday morning session - with a map - an Ontario highway map good enough to get us in the area but without a good navigator in the bucket seat and it soon became very obvious to us that you (can't) get to where you want to go if you don't know where you are - and you can't possibly know where you are unless you know where you are coming from.

That assembly of men and women who gathered in that barn 50 years ago are our beginning even though not one of us here today was there. That is not to say there are not a whole series of events in the stormy history of the Canadian people that we firmly identify with - William Lyon Mackenzie, Louis Papineau and yes including Chief Poundmaker.

But we live in the epoch of the world socialist revolution, the epoch of the transition from capitalism to socialism, and we have set ourselves the task as revolutionaries to forge the instrument that will make that transition not only easier but possible.

That is why we can't start from any other point, say the founding of the CCF or the NDP, which is not part of our tradition but is reformist, nor even from the organization of the International Left Opposition. And why we are not at all prepared to say we are starting from here - from Waterloo as much more inspiring these circumstances may well appear compared to that huddle down the road in a

barn.

We commenced with the coming together of all the best of a previous period of Canadian radicalization, that having grasped the great significance of the first breakthrough that took place in Russia, came together in 1921 to found what was shortly to be known as the Communist Party of Canada.

You have to know where you came from

That is where our idea commenced - it is from there that our ideology, which we have tested and expanded, first took root on Canadian soil. It is the good fortune of revolutionaries here in Canada that they can not only trace out their origin and the development of their ideology, but there is a direct continuity in the physical composition of the revolutionary cadre.

It was not Tim Buck of the Canadian CP of today who was the founder of the CPC - he was only one of the participants and as subsequent events showed got in there through a misunderstanding. The first general secretary was Jack MacDonald who held that post in the revolutionary days until expelled in 1929 - and the chairman of that party was Maurice Spector, its leading theoretician and publicist who was expelled in 1928. There are several of us in this room tonight who knew both or one of these revolutionary socialists personally and joined the political movement that they constituted to continue the struggle that they initiated back in 1921. A considerable number of us in this room had the honor to know both Max Armstrong and Malcolm Bruce who were there and who rejoined us, one and two generations younger than they, in common cause to build the revolutionary vanguard party.

William Rodney in his valuable researched work ***Soldiers of the International*** -- *a history of the Communist Party from 1919 to 1929* has the work of that founding Congress end in disarray with the expulsion of Jack MacDonald in 1929. He accurately says that MacDonald's expulsion "marked the end of a era in the history of the CP of C." But Rodney is dead wrong when, after he relates how MacDonald joined Spector, he says that their efforts ended in failure.

We here today are the fruit of their efforts and I think any impartial observer would say that Rodney's sentence is not only premature but dead wrong. As most of you are aware over the years under the pressure of events both Stalin and his acolytes and his heirs have been compelled to write and re-write new and different versions of the history of the Great Russian Revolution of 1917, and the whole period of subsequent history.

Tim Buck, Stalin's chief acolyte in Canada and toady of Stalin's heirs, who with increasing difficulty continues his political expropriation

of the Soviet masses, has been compelled by Rodney's book to rewrite his previous histories of the CPC. Late last fall his book **Lenin and Canada** appeared. Of the some 91 pages of new material, 35 of its pages or more than one-third, deal with what he calls "from political inexperience, to the struggle for Leninism." When Buck says Leninism he of course really means Stalinism - for Buck as the CPC has crashed from one rock to another disgorging leader after leader until almost he alone remains as an unregenerate Stalinist.

But when he writes of the political inexperience of the revolutionaries who came in 1921 from all the previous radical formations, he is not dealing with the genuine and vital contributions that Lenin and the Bolsheviks made to the birth of the movement. To be sure there were lots of things wrong with the men and women who came together in 1921 in the first attempt to found a revolutionary vanguard party. But there was one thing about them that marked them out from their generation - they were revolutionary socialists and they were honest.

How the first Communists became the first Trotskyists

In fact they were Trotskyists - Maurice Spector in the statement that he hurriedly submitted to the Political Committee of the CPC on November 6, 1928 denies the existence of something called Trotskyism - he was challenged to endorse the expulsion of three of his U.S. co-workers including James P. Cannon from the Workers Party of America and to agree to carry an aggressive campaign against the platform of the Opposition led by Trotsky in the CPSU *(Communist Party of the Soviet Union.)*

He assured the Political Committee that "I am prepared to wage an aggressive campaign for Leninism" and went on to explain that Trotskyism as distinct from Leninism is a myth designed to obscure the real issues, which are the destruction of the Leninist party with its democratic centralist structure and the Leninist doctrine - with the theory of socialism in one country, today known as peaceful coexistence in the name of which the Kremlin and Peking sell out the struggle of Bangladesh and the youth revolt in Ceylon.

Yes, they were revolutionaries and honest - and it wasn't easy to substitute Leninism with Stalinism on them. Shortly after the death of Lenin, Stalin and his cohorts in mock honor of the founder of the Bolshevik party announced the "Lenin levy" - they opened the doors of the party to a vast influx of new members, to swamp the Bolshevik core in a morass of new and inexperienced elements subject to all the increasing pressure that arose from the increasing isolation of the impoverished workers' state.

This policy was translated by Buck at a meeting of the Political Bureau in May of 1924 into a motion calling for a party- wide educational campaign on the dangers of both opportunist and leftist deviations. Both Spector and MacDonald spoke against this and the proposal was defeated 6 to 3.

In the spring of 1925 William Moriarty attended the plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International on behalf of the

CPC, where Trotsky and the Left Opposition were under vicious attack - Moriarty wired the party leadership for instructions as to how he should vote on the charge that Trotskyism is anti-Leninist and harmful to the cause of socialism. MacDonald polled the Political Bureau and sent the following telegram to Moriarty and the Executive Committee of the CI:

"The executive committee 'is not convinced' on the basis of the evidence obtained, that the Comintern is actually menaced and confronted with a system constituting Trotskyism. Notwithstanding Trotsky's mistakes prior to 1917 and during the course of the revolution we are not convinced that the implications of the 'permanent revolution' theory 'attributed to him' are actually entertained by Trotsky and that he contemplates revision of Leninism. We are of the opinion that the prestige of the Comintern has not been enhanced here by the bitterness of the anti-Trotsky attack. No request from leading elements or party membership for discussion in the Party press." Not even the censure of the Executive Committee of the CI was sufficient to cause the leadership of the young CP of C to buckle under. Buck reports that his effort to reopen the question a the next meeting of the Political Bureau was defeated by a vote of seven to two. By placing it on the Political Bureau again Buck assured that the question would be open for debate at the Fourth National Convention of the party from Jack MacDonald's report.

MacDonald's report which placed as Buck says "the Canadian party squarely in Trotsky's camp," was adopted with only seven votes in opposition. Subsequently Buck went as a delegate to the Seventh Plenum of the ECCI where the campaign to drive Trotsky out of the CPSU and quash the Bolshevik opposition in the CPSU was at its height. Buck reports how he returned to Canada with the confident feeling that now the shoe was on the other foot... "the Political Bureau and **The Worker**, we thought, will have to either accept or reject the line to which we (Buck and Popovitch) have committed our Party."

The Trotskyists stand up to the Stalinization drive

To Buck's surprise when he demanded at the end of his report that "as the elected leaders of the Communist
Party of Canada, we have to decide whether we are on Lenin's side in this struggle or if we are against him" - Maurice Spector stopped him and demanded he withdraw that statement. "It was" Spector declared "a brazen attempt to intimidate the members of the Political Bureau - a Stalinist trick which expressed only the opinion of the delegation. The work of the delegation is yet to be judged by this committee and its judgment will decide who will be permitted to speak for Lenin."

Despite Spector the Political Bureau adopted the report. Spector announced his resignation from the Political Bureau and from office of editor of the party press and chairman of the party. The meeting refused to accept his resignations and reaffirmed him in these posts.

Buck was compelled to withdraw his motion that Spector should be required to change his vote on the resolution.

Subsequent to that Spector and MacDonald were elected to represent the CPC at the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International, and Spector on the recommendation of the CPC was elected as a member of the Executive Committee of the Comintern. It was at that assembly of the CI that Spector and James P. Cannon of the American party came across Trotsky's "Criticism of the Draft Program of the Communist International." With this clarification in hand they decided to launch the world-wide struggle in support of Trotsky and against Stalin and his policies that transformed the Communist parties of the world from instruments for the socialist revolution in their own countries to border guards of the USSR and pawns in the diplomatic maneuvers of the Soviet bureaucracy.

What kind of men and women were they who gathered in the barn at Guelph and issued forth to build the Communist movement? They came out of the first important wave of radicalization that arose prior to the World War I, peaked in the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike, and was dissipated in the great economic boom of the 1920s.

It was neither the character of the chief contestants Spector and MacDonald versus Buck or their respective programs that decided the outcome of the struggle in the 1930s. It was the prestige and authority of the Soviet Union, the product of the October Revolution - and the ebb of the radicalization that allowed the Stalinization of the thin layer of vanguard elements that had come to the Communist Party - and on the other hand assured the isolation of MacDonald and Spector and the heroic band that began anew the struggle to build the Workers Party of Canada.

Buck won the essential cadre of the party which in the next wave of radicalization with the great crash of 1929 and the rise of the CIO carried the CP forward and won thousands to its ranks. It grew despite its most flagrant violation of the most elementary principles of class struggle politics. Its fatal flaw - its programmatic bankruptcy - has only become clear with the crisis of its masters in the Kremlin, under the rising struggle for socialist democracy, the revelation on a world scale of the counter-revolutionary character of the theory of socialism in one country or peaceful coexistence - and in this country, the rise of the New Democratic Party.

The LSA is carrying on the spirit of '21

We are of the same breed as the men and women who gathered together in Guelph in 1921. They were a thin
layer of the best from the various revolutionary currents of their day who assimilated the key lessons of the October Revolution, plus new youthful revolutionaries with no real experience in the class struggle but inspired by the possibilities of a socialist Canada and prepared to dedicate their lives to win it.

While they learned much from the Bolsheviks both on the plane of revolutionary organization and principled class politics, they were not quite so raw and unsophisticated as Buck makes out. I am not referring to their mighty resistance to the Stalinization of the party in the first decisive 8 to 12 years.

They learned much from the Bolsheviks both on the plane of revolutionary organization and principled revolutionary politics. They forged their ideas in struggle with the spontaneists and direct actionists of their time. They fought revolutionary syndicalists and ouvrierists. They won the best from both the IWW *(International Workers of the World - the "Wobblies")* and the OBU *(One Big Union)* . If I am not mistaken a group of new left students here in Waterloo adopted the name and what they thought was the style of the Industrial Workers of the World.

At one time the boss propaganda machine attempted to smear this inveterate band of revolutionary industrial unionists as "I Won't Work." In part this was an attempt to demean professional revolutionaries - full-time IWW organizers - before the eyes of the North American workers who were steeped in the protestant work ethic.

In the course of the IWW's degeneration, as the best elements joined the CPC, some cast-offs glorified in and assumed the character of "I Won't Workites." It rejected any and all concepts of an all-inclusive party - a party open to every and all ideas. It rejected any and all concepts that the party was or could be a microcosm of the new socialist society, that the party has something to do with concepts of life style. It was a serious and hard working party which rejected all forms of intellectual dilettanteism and discussion circle concepts. It was a party that sought to unite the advanced sectors of the working population, to root itself in the ranks of the strategically-placed industrial working class, to win them to its political program and mobilize them in struggle to overthrow capitalism.

It governed itself on the principles of democratic centralism - it allocated time to discuss and time to act - above all its discussions were geared to the act. Following a full and ample discussion it conceived that all were committed to act along the line of the democratically arrived at decision.

In a word it was the prototype of the LSA/LSO. Of course they didn't have all the answers - but they had more than any other party. Nor do we have all the answers - but we should have more since we come to here with another 50 years of class struggle experiences. We stand by all counts in a better position than our predecessors of 1921-1929 did.

Canada is now a highly urban society; the overwhelming majority are wage laborers; they are highly organized both on the union and political plane, and if they haven't yet come to socialism, the great masses of the population don't believe - they don't believe in capitalism, and more as they become jobless and the cost of living rises, (they) won't "believe in a Buick," as the advertising hucksters say - something to believe in.

Today one-half of the world's population is under 15. In the brief lifetime of the protesting youth of today we have gone through four major epochs: the atomic age, the computer age, the space age and the bio-engineering age or DNA age, according to Ritchie Calder: "Each of them is as significant as the bronze age, the iron age, the Renaissance or the industrial revolution - and all have been telescoped into the post-war years."

Today has significantly been called the Age of the Permanent Revolution; that's the age of the Fourth International, and in Canada the coming of age of the LSO/LSA.

(*End of this historical series)*

GLOSSARY of Canadian Socialist & Labor Parties & Tendencies – 1894-1971
(Notes typewritten and corrected in RD's hand, found in 1972)

1894: Socialist Labor Party: was the first generally Marxian socialist formation on the North American continent. Its leading figure, Daniel LeLeon, led a vigorous struggle on both sides of the border against reformist and class collaborationist tendencies that swept up the North American Left at the turn of the century. The SLP's sectarian counterposing of the ideal industrial union to the prevalent union structures, and its rigid doctrinarism soon became its chief hallmark, which led to its divorce from the real processes of the working class movement and its decline into an educational sect. It too provided some of the early cadre of the Communist Party of Canada. At one time it was composed of a network of groups across Canada but today *(1972)* it has been reduced to a few handfuls in three or four centers which are completely outside the processes of radicalization, and which conduct classes on fundamental principles and circulate the US-published *Weekly People.*

1904: Socialist Party of Canada: It played a key rôle in the early days of Canadian socialism. It conducted socialist propaganda on a broad and successful scale in pre-World War I years, particularly in Ontario and B.C. It contained a wide spectrum of opinion in its ranks from gradualists and parliamentarists to academic Marxists and revolutionary socialists. The SP of C suffered several splits, one of which led to the formation of the **Social Democratic Party** *(no details –ed.).*

Later – following World War I – many of its cadre helped form the Communist Party. In later years it suffered defections to the CCF. It continued a fitful existence until today it appears to have completely disappeared.

Post-1904:
Socialist Party of North America: One of the breakaway groups from the SP of C which shortly afterwards joined with others in 1921 to help form the Communist Party.

Industrial Workers of the World (IWW): arising at the turn of the century and spreading across the continent, the IWW *(also widely known as the "Wobblies" – derived from the inability of Chinese worker militants to pronounce the English "d" – ed.)* was the pioneer of the concept of industrial unionism. Noted for the militant direct action of its members, who while unionists, were also advocates of revolution, of fundamental social change. They were the first socialist group in America that attracted and fielded a real corps of activists who were sustained by the movement and who devoted their full time to the cause. Their main strength was in the US, but as late as 1911 they claimed 10,000 members concentrated amongst workers in basic industry in Alberta and BC. On the eve of World War I they were subjected to a massive organized assault and prosecution by the giant corporations and their allies in government.

In 1918 Ottawa declared the IWW an unlawful organization, with anyone holding membership in it subject to 1-5 years imprisonment. Among their many martyrs was balladeer Joe Hill. Under the influence of the Russian Revolution many of them played an important rôle in the formation of the Communist Party of Canada before it disappeared from the scene. *(See a recent partial history in:* "James P. Cannon and the origins of the American Revolutionary Left 1890-1928" Chapter 3, *by Canadian labor historian Bryan D. Palmer, 2007, University of Illinois Press –ed.)*

1919: One Big Union: The OBU was formed out of a massive schism between the Western Canadian affiliates of the Canadian Trades and Labor Congress and its Eastern-based leadership. Broad discontent with the conservative policies of the TLC and its domination by the Eastern sectors of the union movement found expression in the Western Labor Conference held in Calgary in 1919 on the initiative of the Vancouver Labor Council. Along with firm identification with the concept of industrial unionism, the 6-hour day and 5-day week, and a general strike to win it, the 239 delegates adopted a series of resolutions hailing the formation of workers' councils *(the soviets)* in Petrograd, demanding withdrawal of all Canadian troops from the forces of the allied intervention, and expressing solidarity with the German revolutionary struggles and its spokespersons Rosa Luxembourg and Karl Liebknecht.

The central committee struck off by the delegates was instructed to conduct a referendum on a call for a general strike for June 1st (1919) and the principle of One Big Union, (the CC becoming) known as the General Executive Board of the OBU. However, the Winnipeg General Strike broke out, which saw an enlarged strike committee rule this Mid-West city for 41 days. The smashing of the strike through the imposition of Section 98 by the federal government and the arrest of its leaders, some of them leaders of the OBU, combined with a series of punitive actions by the leadership of the TLC against dissident locals, lead to the rapid dissolution of the OBU. A scattering of locals isolated in Winnipeg and Thunder Bay carried on under the leadership of R.B. Russell until they finally joined the Canadian Labor Congress in about 1956.

1921: Communist Party of Canada (CPC): formed under the inspiration of the establishment of the first workers' state in Russia in 1917 by elements drawn from the IWW, the OBU, the SLP, the SP of C, and the SP of NA, etc. it first adopted the name Workers Party in 1922, and then the name Communist Party in 1923. With a corps of able and articulate spokespersons, through a firm identification with the immediate demands of widening layers of the workers, linking them up with a communist objective, the Communist Party soon established itself as the dominant force on the Left. It endorsed the famous 21-points of admission to the Communist International and became the Canadian section of the Third International. It's chairman Maurice Spector was the first Canadian elected to the Executive Committee of the Comintern *(the leading body of world communist parties under the revolutionary authority of the CPSU in Moscow –ed.)*

The great struggle in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), personified by Stalin on one hand and Leon Trotsky on the other, soon overflowed into the Comintern and into the youthful Canadian party. Spector sided with Trotsky's struggle which he characterized to the CPC political committee upon his return from the 6th World Congress as one designed to halt the destruction of the Leninist party, its democratic centralist structure and its Leninist doctrine with the *(directly contrary)* Stalinist theory of "socialism in one country.". The expulsion of Jack Macdonald, the party's general secretary in 1928 which followed on the heels of Spector's expulsion, according to William Rodney in his book *Soldiers of the International* "marked the end of an era in the history of the Communist Party of Canada."

While deprived through its Stalinization of its revolutionary program, the great crash of 1929 and the radicalization that flowed in its wake highlighted by the rise of the CIO together with the prestige that it gained by its association with the Soviet Union, nevertheless carried the CP forward. However, its support of the Stalin-Hitler Pact caused considerable disaffection as no doubt did its support of the no-strike pledge *(during World War II –ed.)*, its appeal for a "yes" vote on conscription and its open support of the Liberal party against the CCF. But by the end of World War II its leader Tim Buck could (still) boast a membership of over 15,000 with wide influence in a score of unions.

This edifice commenced to crumble with the revelations by Soviet leader Nikita Khruschchov of the crimes committed by Stalin, his frame-up murders of Lenin's closest co-workers and leaders of the October Revolution and his horrendous violations of soviet democracy. This resulted in one giant blow in the defection of the majority of the (Canadian) Communist Party's central leadership. This process of demoralization and defection has continued with the Russian Army's invasion of Hungary and Czechoslovakia, the independent stand taken by Yugoslavia and the dispute of the Soviet leadership with the leaders of the Chinese Peoples Republic. (CPC membership was) now down to 2,000.

The new radicalization commenced in Canada as the CPC had become branded in the eyes of widening layers as an apologist of the worst features of the Soviet regime and it was confronted with the rise of a mass labor party formation – the New Democratic Party.

(Ed. Note: The CPC adopted the name Labor Progressive Party – LPP – during the World War 2 years until the 1960s.)

(Ed. Note: Further handwritten notes reviewing articles in the CPC's theoretical journal "Communist Viewpoint" are found in this archive: notes on CV articles on the founding of the Young Communist League (YCL) in 1970 in response to the youth radicalization; notes on various YCL attacks on Trotskyism; notes on C. McFadden's keynote address to the founding convention of the YCL: "The Sixties was the decade of revolt, the CPC and YCL are out of touch;'' a note on Stalinist 'theoretician' Stewart's article entitled "The Ultra-Infantile-Anarchist Left in Canada"; notes on a Nov-Dec. 1959 CV article on structuring the YCL; notes on an article by CV writer W.C. Beeching on the need for a "Worker-Student (anti-monopoly) Alliance;" notes on a CV Jan-Feb.

1972 review of the "New Radicalism: Anarchism or Marxism" by Gil Green (portraying the new radicalism as anarchist, and the New Left as infantile, utopian, anarchist, and both left- and right-opportunist) (and RD's reference note on this subject: Gad Horowitz: "Canadian Labor in Politics," 1968).

1933: CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation): organized in Regina through the fusion of farmers' movements co-op organizations and political protest groups that moved left under the impact of the Great Depression. While it rapidly made connections with other currents, largely petty-bourgeois and liberal-reformist, in the West particularly in Saskatchewan and BC, it sank extensive roots. As early as 1935 it polled a plurality of votes in BC. While committing itself in the Regina Manifesto to "stand resolutely against all participation in imperialist war," the outbreak of World War II saw the parliamentary leadership underwrite the war.

By 1943 the CCF had developed sufficient roots in the working class that the Canadian Congress of Labour convention endorsed the CCF as its political arm. By the end of the war and with the anticipation of broad changes by wide layers of the population, there resulted a real growth in the CCF's influence. By 1944 it won office in Saskatchewan. Furthermore, by 1948 it was apparent that the party's base of support had shifted and it had become a labor party formation.

In the meantime unity negotiations between the Canadian Congress of Labor and the Trade and Labor Congress, which had rejected politics, were underway. This unification took place in 1956 resulting in the formation of the Canadian Labor Congress which adopted a resolution on political education.

In 1958 the Congress and CCF officers issued a call for a "new party" endorsed by their respective conventions in 1960. (The "New Party") soon to become the New Democratic Party was officially launched in 1961 in a wave of great anticipation.

From its beginning the CCF has always numbered in its ranks a scattering of elements who consider themselves Marxists. One of the founding leaders, M.J. Coldwell, (later attributed) some of the radical concepts of the Regina Manifesto to Trotskyist elements. This veteran leader of the CCF in his book *Some Reminiscences,*, the CCF 25th anniversary souvenir, states that at the founding convention in Regina in

1933 "we had a small group from Toronto who were in reality Trotskyites." *(Over twenty years later)* In a report to the 1955 convention the BC (CCF) executive blamed Trotskyism in the movement for the failure of the BC party to win office in the 1952 election.

Longstanding efforts by the party's leadership to rid themselves of the radical strictures in the Regina Manifesto were successful at the 1956 Winnipeg convention with the adoption of a clearly liberal-reformist declaration of principles. The Winnipeg Declaration of Principles saw the final victory of the top leadership over those forces in the party who for years had been trying to uphold the principles of the party's foundation convention in 1933 embodied in the Regina Manifesto.

1936: League for a Revolutionary Workers Party: a split-off from the Workers Party, which soon developed a whole series of positions in opposition to the WP. While identifying itself with the concept of a Fourth International it condemned its actual formation by Trotsky in 1938 and associated itself with the so-called London Bureau supported by centrist currents. It opposed entry into the CCF on the principle that the vanguard must retain an independent and public organization at all times. After a period of intense activity it burned itself out and with the advent of World War II disappeared without a trace.

1961: League for Socialist Action-Ligue Socialiste Ouvrière: while its main orientation is toward the New Democratic Party and the CCF before it, the LSA-LSO has its origin in the early communist movement. It claims identity with the Workers Party, the name first chosen by the Marxist-Leninists who gathered in Guelph in 1921, and again taken up by the relatively small group of workers and students gathered together by Maurice Spector and Jack Macdonald to commence the struggle to build anew a Canadian Marxist-Leninist party. This core of Canadian revolutionary socialists had early associated themselves with Trotsky's call for the formation of an international Left Opposition to win the Communist Parties of the world back to the Leninist path and then, following the debacle suffered by the German Communist Party and by the rise of Hitler, to embrace Trotsky's call for a new party and a new international – the Fourth International.

Its tiny forces, constantly harassed by the Communist Party as counter-revolutionary and fascist agents, published their press *The Vanguard* and conducted educational work under grave difficulty. The defeats, prior to World War II, in China, Germany, France and Spain only tended to further isolate them.

In 1937 they formally dissolved their independent organization to enter the CCF where they hoped to join with a growing socialist wing and win cadre. In 1938, following a series of expulsions of the supporters of the Socialist Policy Group, they reconstituted themselves as the Socialist Workers' League around the publication *Socialist Action.* But the SWL was almost immediately confronted by World War II which it alone of all the various tendencies opposed as an imperialist war on the part of Canada and the Allied Powers. Its paper was suppressed and one of its spokesmen was the first victim of the War Measures Act *(with the jailing of comrade Frank Watson).*

As World War II came to a close the Canadian Trotskyists launched a monthly paper, *Labor Challenge,* directed primarily to the forces gravitating to the CCF. In 1946 it launched an independent organization called the **Revolutionary Workers' Party (RWP)** which took on a skeletal cross-Canada form. But in 1952 the Trotskists again dissolved their public organization to enter the CCF. After a series of expulsions (from the CCF) they reappeared with additional forces in 1955 as the **Socialist Education League (SEL)** with the paper *Workers' Vanguard.* In 1961, on the eve of the formation of the New Democratic Party, the SEL of Toronto joined a parallel organization in Vancouver called the Socialist Information Center (SIC) to launch the League for Socialist Action.

1960-1965: Young Socialists-Ligue des Jeunes Socialistes: a youth organization in political solidarity with the LSA-LSO, as the continuation of the Young Socialist Alliance organized in about 1958 *(in solidarity as well with the sister-YSA in the US, and circulating their US journal* Young Socialist *–ed.)* With the formation of the NDP and the New Democratic Youth, the YSA gave up its independent organization to move fully into the work of building the NDY, taking the message of labor and socialism into the developing youth radicalization. Following a series of expulsions engineered by the NDP right wing in July 1965, delegates representing some 60 Young Socialists formed around the paper *Young Socialist Forum* (later the *Young Socialist* -ed.), uniting to hold the first cross-Canada convention.

1964: Progressive Workers Movement: The rupture in relations between the Peking and Moscow regimes set off widespread dissension in the Communist Party of Canada. In 1964 (in B.C.) Jack Scott and a group of others with connections in and around the NDP were expelled from the CPC for pro-Peking "factional activity." Shortly after, they formed the PWM. The main political capital of the group was the widespread interest in China and its progress, and the pole of attraction that the Chinese left criticism of the Kremlin's policies gave to it in radicalizing layers of the youth.

However along with its identification with Stalin, PWM took an ultra-leftist direction. It characterized the NDP as a capitalist party, the international unions that many Canadian unionists are affiliated to as CIA fronts, Cuba a capitalist state and the rising anti-Vietnam war movement as petty-bourgeois. By 1970 according to an editorial in its press which had deteriorated to a monthly newsletter, it admitted to having been reduced to a group of seven people.

1965: Canadian Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist): which, for a period had a loose working relationship with the Vancouver-based PWM, comes out of the Internationalists – a group of radical students centered on the University of British Columbia campus in 1963-1965. Since then this group, the most completely identified with the Mao regime in China, has colonized Montreal and Toronto and has become, while small, the only cross-Canada Maoist group – even spreading into the United States around Cleveland. Unlike PWM or CPL they support the Quebec national struggle, although they label all the present forces as fascist or dominated by the pro-imperialist bloc of the rising French-Canadian bourgeoisie, and have already structured a **Communist Party of Quebec (M-L).** They subscribe to the two-stage theory of the revolution and project a national-democratic anti-imperialist struggle as being on the order of the day in Canada. In the 1971 Ontario elections

they urged "don't vote NDP" by widely circulating a poster declaring "Don't vote – They are all the Same." Their chief slogan is "Escalate Peoples' War." While not developed in any realistic programmatic sense to mobilize effective actions, this slogan has served to thrust them into innumerable confrontations with the police resulting in many arrests which they boast about as proof that Canadian capitalism is merely a paper tiger, and their victory is at hand.

1968: Canadian Party of Labor: CPL comes out of a split from the original Maoist organization, the Progressive Workers' Movement, in late 1968, over the nature of the Vietnam War. In concert with a Maoist organization called Progressive Labor in the United States a group of Maoists largely concentrated in Toronto and one or two other Ontario centers condemned the National Liberation Front as being revisionist and in the process of liquidating the Vietnamese struggle because of their opening up of negotiations with the US through the Paris peace talks. The Vancouver-based PWM refused to accept this line and the Eastern Maoists broke to form CPL. Their main characteristic is their *(blanket –ed.)* rejection of nationalism as ``fundamentally reactionary." They denounce Quebec nationalism but at the same time through their designation of the international unions affiliated to the CLC as agents of US imperialist policies, they attempt to promote Canadian national unions. What influence they had in the campus Left has been largely dissipated by their concept of the "workers' and students' alliance" that demands student radicals desert the campus arena to take over picket lines and attempt to win workers strikes for them.

(Maoist tendencies not described here include Canadian Liberation Movement (CML) as well as Quebec Maoist formations – the "CPQ (M-L)" mentioned above and "En Lutte" being two; see some polemics in the LSO Quebec Journals section of this website – ed.) (Ms notes add that also not mentioned are other then current organizations: the New Democratic Youth (NDY), the CSM, the TSM and the (Trotskyist sectarian) Workers' League.

1969: Waffle: appeared on the scene with the publication of the document "For an Independent Socialist Canada," presented as a resolution in the discussion preparatory to the federal convention of the NDP in Winnipeg, October 1969. The statement was prepared and endorsed by a number of prominent radicals some of whom came out of the experiences of the New Left to join the NDP and advocate within it a more radical, a socialist policy. Perhaps the chief stimulation was the rising Canadian nationalist or anti-imperialist opposition to growing domination of the Canadian economy and society by US capitalism.

This broad left formation immediately captured the support of wide forces in the NDP who had been already undergoing a process of radicalization. The Waffle candidate for federal leader of the party, Jim Laxer, at the April 1971 convention won the support of 37% of the delegates – *(a bloc formed from)* a slight majority of the constituency delegations and about 100 delegates from trade union affiliates.

The Waffle, particularly in its leadership, is composed of a wide spectrum of opinion on many key questions confronting the Left but there is no question that it has distinct Marxist overtones.

The Waffle is the expression of the revival of Marxism as a broadening current in Canada's mass labor party formation.

Further handwritten notes:

(CUCND) Combined Universities Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, launched by students and faculty in Montreal, held its first demonstration on Christmas Day 1959 in Ottawa. Commencing as a broad liberal coalition it radicalized in the process of its actions and with the acceptance by Prime Minister Lester Pearson in late 1963 of nuclear arms *(US military's "Bomarcs" on Canadian soil – ed.)* Became a cross-country movement largely of university students – (producing) a petition of 120,000 names opposing nuclear armament of Canada

(SUPA) Student Union for Peace Action, came out of CUCND marking a further process of the radicalization of student activists. However it moved off the campuses and took on a multi-issue character being involved in, as well as anti-nuclear arms protests, black communities in Nova Scotia, Indian communities in Nova Scotia, Doukhobors in British Columbia, and city poor in Kingston (Ontario)

(CYC) Company of Young Canadians – set up by the Canadian government with extensive funds at its disposal, it siphoned off many militants from SUPA by picking up many of its projects and giving them a defined reformist goal.
Canadian Union of Students *(no details)*

(end of transcribed notes –other extensive notes on YCL and CPC press found in archives)